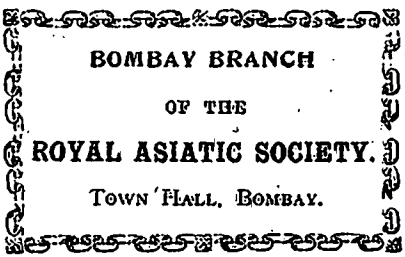
00094507



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 March, 2016

AMENITIES

OF

LITERATURE,

CONSISTING OF

SKETCHES AND CHARACTERS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

BY I. D'ISRAELI,

D.C.L. F.S.A.

94507

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
MDCCCXLI.

Fon
820.9
D'is/Anne
94507

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

	PAGE
THE FIRST TRAGEDY, AND THE FIRST COMEDY	1
THE PREDECESSORS AND CONTEMPORARIES OF SHAKESPEARE	20
SHAKESPEARE	44
THE "HUMOURS" OF JONSON	125
DRAYTON	135
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY OF RAWLEIGH	144
THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHER, DR. DEE	189
THE ROSACRUSIAN FLUDD	229
BACON	241
THE FIRST FOUNDER OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY	
EARLY WRITERS, THEIR DREAD OF THE PRESS,—THE TRANSITION TO AUTHORS BY PROFESSION	
THE AGE OF DOCTRINES	
PAMPHLETS	
THE OCEANA OF HARRINGTON	

PAGE

THE AUTHOR OF "THE GROUNDS AND REASONS OF MONARCHY" 340

COMMONWEALTH 345

THE TRUE INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSE . 349

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PUBLISHERS OF CONTEMPORARY MEMOIRS 366

THE WAR AGAINST BOOKS 389

AMENITIES

OF

LITERATURE.

THE FIRST TRAGEDY AND THE FIRST COMEDY.

In the transition from the simpler interlude to the aggrandisement of a more complicate scene and more numerous personages, so indistinct were the notions of tragedy and comedy, that the writer of a morality in 1578, declaring that his purpose was to represent "the manners of men, and fashion of the world now-a-days," distinguishes his drama both as "a Pleasant Tragedy" and "a Pitiful Comedy *." This play, indeed, may be placed among the last of the ancient dramas; and it is probable that the author considered that these vague expressions might serve to designate a superior order of dramatic productions.

* "A Moral and Pitiful Comedie," entitled, "All for Money," &c. by T. Lupton, 1578. In the prologue the author calls it "A Pleasant Tragedy."

The term Comedy was as indefinite in France as with ourselves. Margaret of Valois, in 1544, gave the title of comedy to such scriptural pieces as "The Nativity," "The Adoration of the Kings," and "The Massacre of the Innocents;" and in Spain, at the same period, they also called their moral pieces comedies. The title of one of these indicates their matter, "La Doleria del Sueño del Mundo; Comedia tratada por via de Philosophia Moral,"—"The Anguish of the Sleep of the World; a Comedy treated in the style of Philosophic Morality." Comedy was the general appellative for a play. Shakespeare himself calls the play of the players in Hamlet both a tragedy and a comedy. It is quite evident that at this period they had no distinct conception of comedy merely as a pleasant exhibition of society. Aristotle had not afforded them a correct description in our sense, drawing his notions from the old comedy, those personal satires or farcical lampoons acted on the Athenian stage.

To this day we remain still unsatisfied what Dante meant by calling his great poem a "Commedia." Dante throws the same sort of mystery over the species of his poem as he has done over the creation of a classical diction for his own Italy. According to his interpretation, the lofty style was denominated tragic, and in opposition to it he has called his work "Commedia," as of a

more humble style; and on another occasion, he describes comedy as something that begins sadly and ends happily, as we find it in his great poem. We must, however, accept the definition as very obscure, when we consider that both his subject and his diction so often led him to sublimity of conception and expression; but the style of criticism was yet unformed in the days of the Italian Homer.

It is remarkable that Boccaccio has entitled his pastoral of "Ameto" a "Commedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine." It is difficult to imagine that the almost contemporaneous commentator would have misused the word; we might presume he attached the idea of a drama to this disputed term.

While these indistinct notions of tragedy and comedy were prevalent with us, even long after we had a public theatre, we really possessed tragedy and comedy in their more classical form; Tragedy, which soared to the sententiousness of Seneca; and Comedy, which sported with Plautus and Terence.

We owe this first TRAGEDY in our language, represented before the Queen in 1561, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, to the master-spirit who planned "The Mirror for Magistrates," and left as its model "The Induction." SACKVILLE, Lord Buckhurst, the first Earl of Dorset, in that national poem had struck

with the nerve of Chaucer while he anticipated the grave melodious stanza and the picturing invention of Spenser. But called away from the land of the muses to the political cabinet, this fine genius seems repeatedly to have consigned his works to the hands of others; even his lighter productions are still concealed from us in their anonymous condition. As in "The Mirror for Magistrates" Sackville had resigned that noble scheme to inferior names, so in this tragedy of "Ferrex and Porrex," or, as it was sometimes entitled, "The Tragedy of Gorboduc," while his genius struck out the same originality of plan, yet the title-page informs us that he accepted a coadjutor in THOMAS NORTON, who, as much as we know of him in other things, was a worthy partner of Sternhold and Hopkins.

In this first tragedy in our language, cast in the mould of classical antiquity, we find a division of scenes and a progressive plot carried on, though somewhat heavily, through five acts; the ancient ethical choruses are preserved, changing their metres with rhyme. And here, for the first time, blank verse was recited on the stage. Notwithstanding these novel refinements, our first tragedy bears a strong impress of ancient simplicity. Every act was preceded by "a dumb show," prefiguring the incidents of the opening act; these scenical displays of something considered to

be analogous to the matter, were remains of the pageants.

Blank verse, which the Earl of Surrey had first invented for his version of Virgil, the Earl of Dorset now happily applied to the dramatic dialogue. To both these noblemen our poets owe their emancipation from rhyme; but the rhythmical artifices of blank verse were not discovered in the monotonous, uncadenced lines of its inventors. The happiest inventor does not overcome all difficulties.

SACKVILLE, in this tragedy, did not work with the potent mastery of his "Induction;" his fire seems smothered in each exact line; he steals on with care but with fear, as one treading on ice, and appears not to have settled in his mind the true language of emotion, for we feel none. He is ethical more than dramatic. His lifeless personages have no distinctness of character; his speeches are scholastic orations: but the purity of his diction and the aptness of his epithets are remarkable; his words and phrases are transparent; and he may be read with ease by those not versed in ancient lore. The political part of the tragedy is not destitute of interest; developing the misery of fraternal wars, the division of sovereign power, each contending for dominion, and closing in the dissolution of all government, by the despair of a people. We

have ourselves witnessed in these times a similar scene of the enmity of brothers and monarchs.

A political anecdote concerning this tragedy is worth recording. In the discussions of the dangers and mischiefs of such a state of insubordination, the poet, adopting the prevalent notions of the divine right and the authority of "the absolute king," inculcates the doctrine of passive obedience. These lines, which appear in the first edition, were silently removed from the later ones*. It is an evidence that these dreary principles, which in the following reigns of James and Charles produced such fatal misunderstandings, even at this time began to be questioned. Our poet, however, under the reckless councils of a court-minion, had covered the severest satire on those monarchs who rage with "the lust of kingdoms," and "subject to no law," and who hold their enormous will to be the privilege of regal power. Sackville seems to have adopted the principle which Machiavel had artfully managed in his "Prince," in the spirit of damning irony.

There is such a level equality throughout the whole style of this drama†, that it has given rise to a suspicion

* The lines, which are very miserable, are preserved in Dodsley's Old Plays.

† Warton has analysed this Drama in his History of English Poetry, vol. iv. 178, 8vo. It is in the Collection of Dodsley and Hawkins.

that the work could only be the composition of one mind and one ear. It is not in the constitution of the human intellect that Norton could emulate Sackville, or that Sackville could bring himself down to Norton. This internal evidence struck Warton; and tracing it by "The Mirror of Magistrates," the suspicion was confirmed; the scenes of "Gorboduc" are visibly marked with the greater poet's characteristics, "in a perspicuity of style and a command of numbers superior to the tone of his times." The name of Norton affixed to the title-page, might only indicate his management of the pageants! and possibly, being a licenser of books and a puritan, even his name might be a recommendation of this drama, for certain persons. Few things in those days were more loosely conducted than the business and the artifices of printers, who generally procured their copies surreptitiously, or were permitted to accommodate them to their own free management and deceptive title-pages.

We must not decide on *the first tragedy* by a comparison with the more attractive and impassioned ones which soon afterwards inundated our theatres. The court-circle had never before listened to such an amazing novelty; and the poetic critic of that day pronounced that "those stately speeches and well-sounding phrases were full of notable morality, which

it doth most delightfully teach." Sir Philip Sidney only grieved that this tragedy might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies, being "faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions." Sidney did not live to witness the code of Aristotle impugned, and his unities set at defiance, by a swarm of dramatic bees, whose wild music and native sweetness were in their own humming and their own honey.

This our first tragedy attracted by its classical form the approval of some great moderns. RYMER, a stout Aristotelian, who has written on tragedy, was astonished to find "such a classical fable on this side the Alps," which, he plainly tells us, "might have been a better direction to Shakespeare and Jonson than any which they had the luck to follow." And Pope was not the less struck by the chaste style and the decorum of Sackville, who having several murders in his tragedy, veiled them from the public eye; conforming to the great Horatian canon, they are told, and not viewed in the representation. Pope in conversation declared, too, that Sackville wrote in a much purer style than Shakespeare in his first plays, without affectation and bombast! and he has delivered a more formal decision in print. "The writers of the succeeding age might have improved as much in other respects by

copying from Sackville, from a propriety in the sentiments and dignity in the sentences, and an unaffected perspicuity of style, which all the succeeding poets, not excepting Shakespeare himself, either little understood or perpetually neglected."

These are edicts from the school of classical antiquity. It was on the earnest recommendation of Pope, that Spence published an edition of this tragedy, which had accidentally been put into the hands of Pope, by the father of the Wartons. Our vernacular writers, even the greatest, were almost unknown in that day, and they only accidentally occurred*.

Spence, a feeble classical critic, was so overcome by the notion that "a privy-counsellor" must be more versant in the language and the feelings of royalty than a plebeian poet, that in his preface pointing out "the stately speeches," he exclaimed in ecstasy—"'Tis no wonder if the language of *kings* and *statesmen* should

* This our first Tragedy, "Ferrex and Porrex," offers a striking evidence of our literary knowledge. Dryden, alluding to it, refers to a spurious copy published under the title of *Gorboduc;* but he could not have seen it, for he calls it *Queen* Gorboduc, whereas he is *King;* and he appears to think that it was written in *rhyme*, and notices Shakespeare as the inventor of blank verse! When Pope requested Spence to reprint "Gorboduc," they were so little cognisant of these matters, that the spurious and defective "Gorboduc" was printed instead of the genuine "Ferrex and Porrex." This ignorance of our ancient writers lasted to a later period.

be less happily imitated by a *poet* than a *privy-counsellor.*" To vindicate Shakespeare, at whom this unguarded blow seemed levelled, the historian of our poetry, seated in his professorial chair, flung his lightning on the impious critic. "Whatever merit there is in this play, and particularly in the speeches, it is more owing to the poet than the privy-counsellor. If a first minister was to write a tragedy, I believe the piece will be the better the less it has of the first minister. When a statesman turns poet, I should not wish him to fetch his ideas or his language from the cabinet. I know not why a king should be better qualified than a private man to make kings talk in blank verse."

Literary history would have supplied the positive fact. Cardinal Richelieu, that great minister, wrote a memorable tragedy; and, in accordance with his own familiar notions, the minister called it "Europe." It was written in the style of "a privy-counsellor," and it was hissed! while Corneille, who wrote as a poet, for the national theatre, composed sentiments which statesmen got by heart.

Our literary antiquaries long doted on the first English comedy—"*Gammer Gurton's Needle*"—being a regular comedy in five acts in rhyme. The rusticity of the materials is remarkable. A diligent crone,

darning the lower habiliments of Hodge, loses her needle—

"A little thing, with a hole in the end, as bright as any siller (silver),
Small, long, sharp at the point, and strait as any piller."

Had a needle not been a domestic implement of more rarity than it is since Birmingham flourished, we had not had such a pointed and polished description. In fact, the loss of the Gammer's needle sets the whole village in flames; the spark falling from the mischievous waggery of a Tom o' Bedlam in an artful insinuation against a certain gossip, notable for the luxuriance of her grotesque invectives. Dame Chat is a scold, whose curses and oaths neither the fish-market nor Shakespeare himself could have gone beyond. Brawls and battles involve the justice, the curate, and the devil himself, in their agency. The prime author of all the mischief produces the catastrophe; for he contrives to make Hodge extract from a part more tender than his heart the cause of so much discord, with great risk to its point and straightness; and the parties conclude—

"For Gammer Gurton's needle's sake let us have a PLAUDITE!"

The writer of this extraordinary, and long supposed to be the earliest comedy in our language, the title-page informs us was Mr. S——, master of arts; and, moreover, that it was acted at the University of Cam-

bridge. When afterwards it was ascertained that Mr. S—— was no less a person than JOHN STILL, subsequently bishop of Bath and Wells, it did not diminish the number of its admirers. The black-letter brotherhood were long enamoured of this most ancient comedy, as a genuine beauty of the infancy of the drama. Dodsley and Hawkins enshrined "Gammer Gurton's Needle" in their Reliquary; and literary superstition

"Swore it was the relick of a saint."

The mere lovers of antiquity endured the raillery of the wits, for the puerility of the plot, the vulgar humour, and the homeliness of the style. One had asserted that "STILL had displayed the true genius of comedy, and the choice of his *subject* only was to be regretted;" another declared that "the vein of familiar humour and a kind of grotesque imagery are not unlike some parts of Aristophanes, but without the graces of *language*." Thus one admirer gives up the subject, and another the style! Even Warton fondly lingered in an apology for the grossness of the "Gammer."—"In a polished age that writer would have chosen, nor would he perhaps have disgraced, a better subject. It has been thought surprising that a learned audience could have endured some of the indelicate scenes. But the established festivities of scholars were

gross, and agreeable to their general habits." This apology has turned out to be more plausible than true.

This ancient comedy is the work of a truly comic genius, who knew not how to choose his subject, and indulged a taste repulsive to those who only admit of delicate, and not familiar humour. Its grossness, however, did not necessarily result from the prevalent grossness of the times; since a recent discovery, with which Warton was unacquainted, has shown the world that an English comedy which preceded the hitherto supposed first comedy in our language, is remarkable for its chasteness—the propriety of its great variety of characters, the truth of the manners in a wide circle of society, and the uninterrupted gaiety pervading the whole airy composition.

So recently as in 1818 an ancient printed drama, styled "Ralph Roister Doister," was discovered *; a legitimate comedy of five acts in rhyme, and, as the writer himself professes, modelled on the dramas of Plautus and Terence. He claims for it the honour of

* Reprinted by the Rev. Mr. Briggs, the possessor. After a limited reprint it was republished as the first number of a cheap edition of Old English Dramas, published by T. White, 1830. Whether this work was carried on I know not. The text reads apparently very correct, and seems to have passed under a skilful eye. I have read it with attention, because I read it with delight.

the highest class—that of "Comedy," but this term was then so indistinct that the poet adds the more usual one of "Enterlude."

GAMMER GURTON is a representation of sordid rusticity. ROISTER DOISTER opens the moveable scenery of domestic life in the metropolis—touched with care, and warm with reality. The plot, without involution, progresses through the acts. An egotistical and affectedly amorous hare-brain, ever lamenting the dangerous beauty of his ridiculous self, fancies to marry a fair dame. He is hit off as

> "So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,
> I trow, never was any creature living."

He is the whetstone of a sharp parasite, whose opening monologue exhibits his full portrait—

> "But, know ye, that for all this merry note of mine,
> He might appose me now that should ask where I dine."

He runs over a nomenclature of a most variegated acquaintance, with some fugitive strictures exquisitely personal. We find ourselves in a more advanced stage in society than we expected in the reigns of our last Henry or Edward. Such personages abounded in the twenty years of peace and luxury under James the First, when the obsequious hanger-on flourished among the town-heroes of "The Gull's Horn-book." This parasite is also one of those domestic dependents whose

shrewdness and artifices supply a perpetual source of comic invention; such as those found among the Latin dramatists, whose scenes and incidents are Grecian, and from whom this "Matthew Merry-greek" by his name seems happily transplanted. This poet delights by scenes coloured with the truth of nature, and by the clear conception of his domestic personages. There is a group of domestics—the ancient housekeeper spinning on her distaff amidst her maidens, some sowing, some knitting, all in free chat; these might have formed a study for the vivid Teniers, and even for Shakespeare in his happiest vein. They are not the domestics of Swift and of Mandeville—the spoilers of the establishment; not that they are without the common feelings of the servants' hall, for they have at heart the merry prosperity of their commonwealth. After their "drudgerie," to dissipate their "weariness" was the fundamental principle of the freedom of servitude. Their chorus is "lovingly to agree." A pleasant song, on occasion of the reception of "a new-come man" in the family, reveals the "mystery" of their ancient craft*.

* This song of Domesticity, as probably it never has been noticed, I preserve in the note, that the reader may decide on the melody of such native simplicity.

This song may have been written about the close of the reign of Henry the Eighth. The short ballad metres, in our ancient

These early dramatists describe their characters by their names; an 'artless mode, which however long

poems, are perfectly harmonious, and the songs are racy and joyous.—

I.

A thing very fitte
For them that have witte
And are felowes knitte
Servants in one house to bee,
As fast fast for to sitte,
And not oft to flitte
Nor varie a whitte,
But lovingly to agree.

II.

No man complainyng
Nor other disdainyng
For losse or for gainyng,
But felowes or friends to bee,
No grudge remainyng,
No work refrainyng
Nor helpe restrainyng,
But lovingly to agree.

III.

No man for despite
By worde or by write
His felowe to twite,
But further in honestie;
No good turns entwite
Nor old sores recite,
But let all goe quite
And lovingly to agree.

IV.

After drudgerie
When they be werie
Then to be merie,
To laugh and sing they be free;

continued to be the practice of our comic writers, and we may still trace it in modern comedies. Steele, in his periodical paper, "The Lover," condemned it as no better a device than of underwriting the name of an animal; it is remarkable, that in this identical paper an old bachelor is called "Wildgoose," and the presumed author of "The Lover" is Marmaduke "Myrtle." Anstey has made the most happy use of characteristic names in the Bath Guide, which is an evidence that they may still be successfully appropriated, whenever an author's judgment equals the felicity of his invention.

Of a comedy, conjectured to have been written at the close of the reign of Henry the Eighth, we may be surprised that the language hardly retains a vestige of the rust of antiquity:—so true it is that the familiar language of the people has been preserved with rare innovations. Its Alexandrine measure properly read, or chanted, is a metre which runs on with facility; the versification has even happily imitated the sounds of the different instruments played on in one of the serenades; a refinement which we could not have imagined

---

With chip and cherie,
High derie derie,
Trill on the berie
And lovingly to agree!

to have been within the reach of an artificer of verse in those days. All this would look suspicious, if for an instant we could imagine that this admirable drama was the contrivance of some Chatterton or Ireland. In style and versification the writer far distanced those of his contemporaries, whose affectation of phrases rendered them harsh and obscure; he has, therefore, approached us. It is remarkable also, that the very measure of this ancient dramatist, though those whose ear is only used to the decasyllablic measure have called it "a long hobbling metre," has been actually chosen by a modern poet, when writing familiar dialogue with the design of reviving rhymed comedy *.

The fate of some books is as remarkable as the histories of some men. This lorn and lost drama, deprived even of its title and the printer's name, offered no clue to the discovery of the fine genius who composed it; and the possessor, who deposited it in the library of Eton College, was not at all aware of its claim to be there preserved. It was to subsequent research, after the reprint had been made, that both the writer and the celebrity of his comedy were indisputably ascertained. We owe the discovery to a comic incident in the drama: an amatory epistle prepared by a scrivener's hand, for our gay amorists then could not always com-

* Hayley.

pose, if they could write their billets-doux, being maliciously read to the lady, by purposely neglecting the punctuation, turned out to be a severe satire. The discomfited lover hastens to wreak his vengeance on the hapless scribe, who, however, reading it with the due punctuation, proves it to be a genuine love-letter. Wilson in his "Art of Logic," gave this letter as an example of the use of punctuation, in settling the sense; and without which, as in the present instance, we may have "a double sense and contrary meaning." He fortunately added that his example was "taken out of an interlude made by NICHOLAS UDALL."

This was the learned UDALL, the master of Eton School; and this very comedy had been so universally admired, that "Roister-Doister" became a proverbial phrase, to designate a hare-brained coxcomb. We now possess two pictures of the habits, the minds, and the dialogue of the English people in rural and in city life, by two contemporaries, who wanted not the art of "holding the mirror up to nature."

THE PREDECESSORS AND CONTEMPORARIES OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE establishment of a variety of theatres is an incident in the history of the people, as well as of the national genius. The drama at first existed, it may be said, in privacy. Royalty and nobility maintained their own companies; the universities acted at their colleges, the "children" or the singing boys at the public schools, the lawyers at their halls; and some of the gentry at their seats had servants who were players. A stage for strollers would occasionally be hastily erected in the unsheltered yards of inns, and they would ramble into the country till an act of Elizabeth in 1572 contro'led these erratic bodies, classing them with "rogues and vagabonds." Throughout the kingdom there was a growing predilection for theatrical entertainments—it was the national anticipation of a public theatre.

If Elizabeth, a popular sovereign, in 1572 checked the strollers assuming the character of players, two years afterwards, in 1574, she granted a patent to the servants of the Earl of Leicester*, "to exercise the faculty of playing stage-plays, as well for the recreation

* This Patent, corrected from a former copy in Rymer, has been recovered by Mr. Collier.—*Annals of the Stage*, i. 211.

of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure;" and she added, "within our city of London, and of any of our cities." This was a boon royally given, in which her "loving subjects" might gather from the tone of this dramatic state-paper, that the queen had resolved in council that the public should not be denied sharing in her own amusements.

The pleasures of the people were not, however, yet those of their grave seignors. The puritanic spirit of the anti-dramatists, which sometimes divided the councils of the queen, had lodged among the honest Ward-motes. A protracted contest between the privy-council and the lord mayor in common council, with protests and petitions, rose up; and long it seemed hopeless to patronise the players, who were not suffered to play. The Recorder Fleetwood, of whom we have many curious police-reports in the style of a *lieutenant de police*—as the chief of his own spies, and the executioner of his own decrees—had himself a fertile dramatic invention, which was largely developed in the singular "orders of the common-council" against the alarming innovation of PUBLIC PLAYS in the boundaries of the civic jurisdiction *. There was not a calamity, moral

* This singular document, incorrectly given by Strype, Mr. Collier has completed. "It throws much new light on the state of the Drama at this period;" and still more on the strange arguments which the Puritans of the day alleged against players and plays.—

and physical, which could happen to any city which the Recorder has not made concomitant with the opening of playhouses. The infection of the plague was, however, then an irrefutable argument. In this contest between the court and the city, the common-council remained doggedly assertors of their privileges; they drove the players from their sacred precincts to the boundaries and to "the liberties," where, however, they harassed these children of fancy by a novel claim, that none were to be free in the "liberties" but themselves, which argument was submitted to the law officers for their decision. The privy-council once more interfered, by a declaration that the chief justices had not yet been able to determine their case, and therefore there was to be no present "intermeddling." It is evident that the government all along had resolved that the people should have a theatre. After two years of opposition to the patent granted to the players in 1574, the first playhouse was built—a timber house in the suburbs—and received the appropriate title of "The

---

Mr. Collier has preserved an old satirical epigram which had been perilous to print at that day; it was left for posterity on the fly-leaf of a book. It is addressed to—

> "'The Fooles of the Cittee,'—
> They establish as a rule,
> Not one shall play the fool,
> But they—a worthy schoole!"

Theatre;" and about the same time "The Curtain" rose in its vicinage, a name supposed to have been derived from that appendage to a stage; for to those who had been accustomed to the open stage of an inn-yard, the drop or "curtain" separating the actors from the audience was such a novelty, that it left its name to the house. The Blackfriars, the Round Globe, the Square Fortune — whence Edward Alleyn, by his histrionic fame, drew the wealth which endowed Dulwich College —are names almost consecrated by the eminent geniuses whose lives were connected with these theatres; and at one time it appears that seventeen playhouses had been erected; they were, however, wooden and thatched, till the Fortune was built with brick, and, in the theatrical phrase, "the heavens," that is, the open top, was tiled.

The popular fervour of the drama had now a centrical attraction; a place of social resort, with a facility of admission, was now opened *; and when yet there was

* At the inferior playhouses the admission was as low as a penny for "the groundlings" who stood in the roofless pit, which still retained the name of "the yard"—evidently from the old custom of playing in the yards of inns. In the higher theatres "a room," or box, varied from sixpence to two shillings and sixpence. They played in daylight, and rose from their dinner to the playhouse. It was one of the City regulations, that "no playing be in the dark, so that the auditory may return home before sunset." Society was

no reading public, the theatre would be substituted for the press; and often, wearied of the bearward and coarser sports, they flocked to the more intellectual entertainment. The playhouse was a wider sphere for their exertions, and it opened an arduous competition for the purveyors of these incessant novelties. The managers of theatres had now to look about for plays and playwrights. A general demand required, not only an abundant, but, unfortunately, a rapid supply. What a crisis for genius, for its development and its destruction!

This was an event in the history of our literature which has not occurred in the literary history of any other European people. It was about the middle of the reign of Elizabeth that a race of dramatic writers burst forth on the nation—writers, not easily numbered, of innumerable dramas.

Literature now opened a new avenue for a poor scholar, the first step of advancement in society from a collegiate life for those who found their future condition but ill provided for. A secretaryship, a chaplainship, or to be a gentleman's usher—in a word, an humble

---

then in its nursery-times; and the solemnity of "the orders in common council" admirably contrasts with their simplicity; but they acted under the terror that, when they entered a playhouse, they were joining in "the devil's service!"

retainer in great families circumscribed the ambition of the meek and the worthy; but there were others, in "their first gamesome age," whose

> —— "doting sires,
> Carked and cared to have them lettered—
> But their kind college from the teat did tent,
> And forced them walk before they weaned were*.

This, however, is but the style of apology which one of them gives to veil the fact, that many were ejected from "the teat." Fiery emanations these, compelled to leave their cloistered solitudes, restless and reckless, they rushed to the metropolis, where this new mart of genius in the rising dramatic age was opened. Play-writing and play-acting, for they were often combined, were too magical a business to resist its delusions.

They wrote, with rare exceptions, without revision. An act or two, composed with some meditation to awaken interest—a few moveable scenes rapidly put together—and, at some fortunate moment, a burst of poetry—usually wound up in pell-mell confusion; for how could they contrive a catastrophe to the chaos? Such writers relied on the passing curiosity which their story might raise, and more on the play of the actors

* Two such poor scholars are introduced in "The Return from Parnassus" alternately "banning and cursing Granta's muddy bank;" and Cambridge, where "our oil was spent."

who, in the last bustling scenes, might lend an interest which the meagre dialogue of the economical poet so rarely afforded. They never wrote for posterity, and seem never to have pretended to it. They betrayed no sympathy for their progeny; the manager's stock was the foundling hospital for this spurious brood; the Muse even often sold her infant while it still lay on the breast. The huddled act of a play was despatched to the manager as the lure of a temporary loan, accompanied by a promissory note of expedition; and assuredly they kept to their word if ever they concluded the work.

This facility of production may be accounted for, not only from the more obvious cause which instigated their incessant toil, but from the ready sources whence they drew their materials. They dramatised evanescent subjects, in rapid competition, like the ballad-makers of their own day, or the novelists of ours; they caught "the Cynthia of the minute"—a domestic incident—a tragic tale engaging the public attention, produced many domestic tragedies, founded on actual events, they were certain of exciting the sympathies of an audience. Two remarkable ones have been ascribed to Shakespeare by skilful judges; "Arden of Feversham," where the repentance of an adulterous wife in the agony of conscience so powerfully reminds one of the great poet, that

the German Tieck, who has recently translated it, has not hesitated to subscribe to the opinion of some of our own critics; and "The Yorkshire Tragedy," which was printed with the name of Shakespeare in his own lifetime, and has been held to be authentic; and surely "The Yorkshire Tragedy" at least possessed an equal claim with the monstrous "Titus Andronicus *" not to be ejected from the writings of Shakespeare. It is most probable that that, among others, was among the old plays which he often took in hand; and our judicial decisions have not always found "the divinity which stirs within

* The popular taste at all times has been prone to view in representation the most harrowing crimes—probably influenced by the vulgar notion that, because the circumstances are literally true, they are therefore the more interesting. One of these writers was Robert Yarrington, who seems to have been so strongly attracted to this taste for scenical murder, that he wrote "Two Lamentable Tragedies," which he contrived to throw into one play. By a strange alternation, the scene veers backwards and forwards from England to Italy, both progressing together;—the English murder is of a merchant in Thames-street, and the Italian of a child in a wood by ruffians hired by the uncle; the ballad deepens the pathetic by two babes—but which was the original of a domestic incident which first conveyed to our childhood the idea of an unnatural parent? It appears that we had a number of what they called "Lamentable Tragedies," whose very titles preserve the names of the hapless victims. Taylor, the water-poet, alludes to these "as murders fresh in memory;" and has himself described "the unnatural father who murdered his wife and children" as parallel to one of ancient date. Acts of lunacy were not then distinguishable from ordinary murders.—*Collier*, iii. 49.

them." The Italian novelists, which had been recently translated in PAINTER's "Palace of Pleasure," these dramatists ransacked for their plots; this source opened a fresh supply of invention, and a combination of natural incidents, which varies the dry matter-of-fact drawn from the "Chronicles," which in their hand too often produced mere skeletons of poetry. They borrowed from the ancients when they could. Plautus was a favourite. They wrote for a day, and did not expect to survive many.

The rapid succession of this multitude of plays is remarkable; many have wholly perished by casualties and dispersions, and some possibly may still lie unsunned in their manuscript state*. We have only the titles of many which were popular; while the names of some of

* Not many years ago Isaac Reed printed "The Witch" of MIDDLETON. Recently another manuscript play appeared, "The Second Maiden's Tragedy." To the personal distresses of the actors in the days of the Commonwealth we owe several dramas, which they published, drawn out of the wrecks of some theatrical treasury; such was "The Wild-Goose Chase" of FLETCHER, which they assured us was the poet's favourite. It is said that more than sixty of these plays, in manuscript, were collected by Warburton, the herald, and from the utter neglect of the collector had all gone to singe his fowls. When THEOBALD solemnly declared that his play, "The Double Falsehood," was written by Shakespeare, it was probably one of these old manuscript plays. This Drama was not unsuccessful; nor had Theobald shot far wide of the mark, since Farmer ascribed it to Shirley, and Malone to Massinger.

these artificers have come down to us without any of their workmanship. In a private collection, Langbaine had gathered about a thousand plays, besides interludes and drolls; and yet these were but a portion of those plays, for many never passed through the press; the list of anonymous authors is not only considerable, but some of these are not inferior in invention and style to the best*. We may judge of the prolific production of these authors by THOMAS HEYWOOD, a fluent and natural writer, who never allowed himself time to cross out a line, and who has casually informed us, that "he had either an entire hand, or, at least, a main finger, in two hundred and twenty plays."

The intercourse of the proprietors or managers of the theatres and these writers has been only incidentally, and indeed, accidentally revealed to us†. It was justly

* See the last and enlarged edition of Charles Lamb's "Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets." In the second volume, in "Extracts from the Garrick Plays," under the odd names of "Doctor Dodypol; a Comedy, 1600," we have scenes exquisitely fanciful—and "Jack Drum's Entertainment, 1601," where "the free humour of a noble housekeeper" may be placed by the side of the most finished passages even in Shakespeare. Yet "Doctor Dodypol" has wholly escaped the notice even of catalogue-scribes—and "Jack Drum" is not noticed by the collectors of these old plays. I only know these two dramas by the excerpts of Lamb; but if the originals are tolerably equal with "The Specimens," I should place these unknown dramas among the most interesting ones.

† By the discovery of the Diary of Henslow, the illiterate manager of the theatre, connected with Edward Alleyn. Henslow

observed by Gifford, that these dramatic poets, either from mortification or humility, abstained from dwelling, or even entering upon their personal history. Though frequent in dedications, they are seldom explicit, and even their prefaces fail to convey any information, except of their wants or their grievances, from evils which are rarely specified. The truth is, that this whole poetical race, which suddenly broke out together, a sort of wild insurrection of genius, early found that they were nothing more than the hirelings of some crafty manager, at whose beck and mercy they lived. Writing plays was soon held to be as discreditable an occupation as that of the players themselves; indeed, not seldom the poets themselves were actors,—these departments were so frequently combined, that the term player is sometimes used equally for a performer on the stage, and a writer of plays.

This fraternity, children of ill-fortune and of passion, were scarce distinguishable from each other, and if the fortunes, and the fate of some, are more known, it is but by the recklessness of their days—their criminal impetuosity. Several perished in their immaturity, torches blazing, while they were consuming themselves.

was the pawnbroker of the company, and the chancellor of its exchequer. He could not spell the titles of the plays; yet, in about five years, 160 were his property. He had not less than thirty different authors in his pay.—*Collier*, iii. 105.

The chance-record of the violent end of one; a cry of desperation still more horrible of another; the death-bed repentance of a third; the dishonourable life of dupery probably practised by a fourth*; are adapted to enter into moral, if not into literary history.

The Psychologist, the historian of the soul among the brotherhood of genius—for such were many among them—feels how precious are the slight memorials of noble passions, disguised by a degraded existence. However tortuous their lives seem, some grasped at celebrity, and some looked towards distant fame. If some have eloquently reproached themselves, there are, too, those who exulted in the consciousness of their intellectual greatness. They were of different magnitude, and in the scroll of their names some have been recognised by posterity.

An ungenial critic has morosely censured Robert Greene, who, harboured in an obscure lodging, which a poor man's charity had yielded, when lying on his death-bed, prayed for the last favour that poor man's charity could bestow on a miserable, but a conscious poet—that his coffin might be covered with bays. In the shadow of death, the poet and the romancer dwelt on the fame which he cherished as life.

Even their small theatres appeared to the poet

* Marlow—Nash—Greene—Peele.

"thronged," and the heart of the dramatist would swell at "the shouts and claps." Drayton, who, at a later day, joined in several dramas, has perpetuated this rejoicing of the poet, which he himself had experienced in that small world "the proud round" of the Globe Theatre. It is a sonnet in the collection which he has entitled "Idea," and which no successful dramatist will read without some happy emotion*.

"In pride of wit, when *high desire of fame*
Gave life and courage to my labouring pen,
And first the sound and vertue of my name
Were grace and credit in the ears of men;
With those the *thronged theaters* that presse,
I in *the circuit* for the Lawrell strove,
Where the *full praise*, I freely must confesse,
In heate of blood and modest minde might move;
With SHOWTS *and* CLAPS *at every little* PAWSE
When the *prowd* ROUND *on everie side hath rung.*"

The ample roll might not be tedious, though it were long, had we aught to record of this brotherhood of genius—but nothing we know of the much-applauded, and much-ridiculed, and most ingenious JOHN LYLY; nothing of the searching and cynical MARSTON; nothing of the inventive and flowing DEKKER; nothing of the unpremeditated strains of the fertile HEYWOOD, nor of the pathetic WEBSTER; nor of MIDDLETON, from whose "Witch," Shakespeare borrowed his incantations; nor of ROWLEY, whom Shakespeare aided;

nor of the equal and grave MASSINGER; nor of the lonely and melancholy FORD.

Among these poets stood He, in whose fire the Greek of Homer burned clear in his Homeric English. Chapman often caught the ideas of Homer, and went on writing Homerically; at once the translator and the original. One may read in that "most reverend aspect" of his, the lofty spirit that told how, above all living, was to him the poet's life—when he exclaimed,

> "The work that I was born to do is done!
> The conclusion
> Makes the beginning of my life; for never
> Let me be said to live, till I live ever *!"

The plays were bought by a manager for his company, and each company was jealously alive, that no

* When Pope translated Homer, Chapman's version lay open before him. The same circumstance, as I have witnessed, occurred with the last translator—Mr. Sotheby. Charles Lamb justly appreciated Chapman, when he observed, that "He would have made a great epic poet, if indeed he has not abundantly shown himself to be one; for his Homer is not so properly a translation, as the stories of Achilles and Ulysses rewritten. The earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems would be incredible to a reader of more modern translations."

The striking portrait of Chapman is prefixed to Mr. Singer's elegant edition of this poet's version of Homer's Battle of the Frogs and the Mice—and the Hymns. His Iliad, collated with his last corrections and alterations, well deserves to fill a stationary niche in our poetical library. Chapman has, above all our poets, most boldly, or most gracefully, struck out those "words that burn"—compound epithets.

other should perform their purchased copies. These monopolists were therefore anxious to suppress the publication of plays, and to smother the fame of their dramatist on their own boards. The players, who were usually copartners, at the sovereign pleasure of their proprietorship, unmercifully mutilated the tender limbs of their poet*, or what was not less usual, made him for ever ridiculous by foisting in whole scenes of the basest humour, as clap-traps for "the groundlings," and which sometimes were perpetuated in the prompter's copy. Such scenes of ribaldry have tainted even immortal pages, and have provoked much idle criticism either to censure or to palliate.

As the stock-copies increased and lost their novelty, they required some new-fashioning. The tarnished piece was drawn out of the theatrical wardrobe; once in vogue, and now neglected, the body, not yet moth-eaten, might be flounced with new scenes. To this humiliated state of jobbers of old plays, were reduced the most glorious names in our drama's roll. Shakespeare, Jonson, and Massinger sate down to

* An original leaf of the manuscript of one of Marlow's plays, in the possession of Mr. J. P. Collier, is a singular literary curiosity. On a collation with the printed copy, the mutilations are not only excessive, but betray a defective judgment. An elaborate speech, designed by the poet to develope the character of the famous Guise, was cut down to four meagre lines.—*Annals of the Stage*, iii. 134.

this obscure drudgery. Our earlier commentators on Shakespeare had no suspicion that even his plays were often *rifacimentos* of neglected stock-copies. When the account-books of Henslow, the manager, were discovered at Dulwich College, they supplied some strange literary anecdotes. This entry appears, "lent to Bengemen Johnson, forty shillings for his adycions to Jeronymo," which was an old favourite play of Kyd's. Again, more lent for "new adycions." When Hawkins republished "Jeronymo" in his collection, he triumphantly rejected these "adycions," as being "foisted in by the players." This he had detected by collation with the first edition; further, his critical decision could not advance. The Diary of Henslow was fatal to the matter-of-fact critic—the passages he had ejected relate to the madness of Hieronymo for the murder of his son; the learned poet never wrote with such a Shakespearian force.

Our early dramatists not only jobbed in this chance-work, but established a copartnership for the quicker manufacture; and we find sometimes three or four poets working on one play, share and share alike, or in due proportions, whenever they could peaceably adjust their mutual celebrities*. Could we penetrate into the

* Charles Lamb has alluded to this fact; and, in one of his moments of enthusiasm, exclaims—"This was the noble practice of these times." Would not the usual practice of a man of genius, work-

recesses of the theatre of that day, I suspect we should discover civil wars in the commonwealth. These partners sometimes became irreconcilably jealous. Jonson and Marston and Decker, who had zealously co-operated, subsequently exhausted their quivers at one another. Greene was incurably envious of Marlow, and got his friend Nash to be as much so, till Marlow and Nash compromised, and wrote together the tragedy of Dido, with the affection of twins. Lofty Chapman flashed an "invective" against proud "Ben," and when Anthony Munday, a copious playwright, was hailed by a critic as "the best plotter," Jonson, in his next play, ridiculed "the best plotter." Can we forget that in "Eastwood Hoe," one of the most amusing of our old comedies, whence Hogarth borrowed the hint of his "Idle and Industrious Apprentices," by Jonson, Chapman and Marston, the madness of Ophelia is poorly ridiculed? It would seem that a junction of the poets usually closed in a rupture.

Our first tragedy and comedy were moulded on the

ing his own drama, be "nobler?" We presume the unity of feeling can only emanate from a single mind. In the instance here alluded to we should often deceive ourselves if we supposed, from the combination of names which appear on the old title-pages, that those who are specified were always *simultaneously employed* in the new direction of the same play. Poets were often called in to alter the old or to supply the new, which has occasioned incongruities which probably were not to be found in the original state.

classical model, for both the writers were university-men. It is, however, remarkable, that the greater number of our early dramatists who now occupy our attention were also members of the universities, had taken a degree, and some were skilful Greek scholars*. How then did it happen, that not one of these scholars submitted to the artificial apparatus and the conventional code of their legislator, the Stagyrite? We observe a sudden revolution in the dramatic art.

Our poets had not to address scholastic critics; for, as one of them has delivered himself,—

> ——— "They would have GOOD PLAYS, and not produce
> Such musty fopperies of antiquity;
> Which do not suit the humorous age's back,
> With clothes in fashion—"

It was their business to raise up that multiform shape, which alone could win the mutable attention of a very mixed audience. At once they clung to the human nature before them; they ran through all the chords of the passions; mingling the comic with the tragic, they struck out a new course in their inartificial drama. They were at all events inventors, for they had no prototypes. Every poet was an original, *more suo*, mindless of the encumbering alloy, for they knew that the

* Green, Nash, Lyly, Peele, and Marston were from the university—Marlow and Chapman were exquisite translators from the Greek.

vein they had opened was their own, and confided too frequently in its abundance to find its richness. It was a spontaneous burst which broke forth in the excitement of these new times, and which, as far as the careless prodigality of the vernacular genius is concerned, in the raciness of its idiom, and the flow of its conceptions, and the freshness of its imagery, can never return, for the virgin genius of a people must pass away!

Valueless, indeed, was our early drama held by graver men. Sir Thomas Bodley wholly rejected from his great library all plays, "to avoid stuffing it with baggage-books;" but more particularly objected to "ENGLISH PLAYS, *as unlike those of other nations*, which are esteemed for learning the languages; and many of them," he adds, "are compiled by men of great wisdom and learning."

The perplexities of the founder of the noble Bodleian Library were occasioned by our dramatic illegitimacy; we had no progenitors, and we were not spell-bound by the three unities. Originality in every kind startled the mind which could only pace in the trammels of authority. On the principle Bodley rejected our *English plays*, he also condemned our *English philosophy*; and Lord Bacon rallied him on that occasion by a good-humoured menace of "a cogitation against

Libraries," which must have made the cheeks of the great collector of books tingle. Bodley with excellent truth described himself as "the carrier's horse which cannot blench the beaten way in which I was trained."

In banishing the productions of the national genius from that national library which his hand had proudly erected, little was Bodley able to conceive, that a following generation would dwell on those very "English plays," would appeal to them as the depositaries of our language, and as the secret history of the people, a history which no historian writes, their modes of thinking in the transition of their manners, in the vicissitudes of their passions, and in the scenes of their politics and their religion; and what most would have astonished our great *bibliophile*, that collectors like himself, presuming on "their wisdom and learning," would devote their vigils to collate, to comment, and to edit "these baggage-books of English plays;" and above all, that foreigners, after a century or two, should enrich their own literature by the translations, or enlarge their own genius by the imitations of these bold originals.

By emancipating themselves from the thraldom of Greece, and the servility of Rome, our dramatists have occasioned later critics to separate our own from the classical drama of antiquity. They are placed in "the

Romantic" school; a novel technical term, not individually appropriate, and which would be less ambiguous, if considered as "the Gothic*." At the time when Italy and France had cast themselves into thraldom, by adhering to the contracted models of the drama of antiquity, two nations in Europe, without any intercourse whatever, for even translation was not yet a medium, were spontaneously creating a national drama accordant with the experience, the sympathies, and the imagination of their people. The theatre was to be a mirror of enchantment, a moveable reflection of themselves. These two nations were England and Spain. The dramatic history of Spain is the exact counterpart which perfectly tallies with our own. In Spain the learned began with imitations and translations of the ancient classics; but these formal stately dramas were so coldly received, that they fell into desuetude, and were succeeded by those whose native luxuriant genius reached

* The term, the Romantic School, is derived from the *langue Romans* or *Romane*, under which comprehensive title all the modern languages may be included; formed, as they are, out of the wrecks of the Latin or *Roman* language. However this may apply to the origin of the *languages*, the term is not expressive of the *genius* of the people. In the common sense of the term "Romantic," the Æneid of Virgil is as much a Romance as that of Arthur and his knights. The term "Romantic School" is therefore not definite. By adopting the term *Gothic*, in opposition to the *Classical*, we fix the origin, and indicate the species.

to the secret hearts of their audience; and it was this second race, not, indeed, so numerous as our own, who closed with the Spanish Shakespeare *. This literary phenomenon, though now apparent, was not perceived when it was occurring.

Every taste has delivered its variable decision on these our old plays, each deciding by its own standard; and the variance is occasioned not always by deficiency in critical judgment, but in the very nature of the object of criticism, in the inherent defect of our ancient drama itself. These old plays will not endure criticism. They were not written for critics, and they now exist even in spite of criticism. They were all experiments of the freest genius, rarely placed under favouring circumstances. They were emanations of strong but short conceptions, poured forth in haste and heat; they blotted their lines as rarely as we are told did Shakespeare; they revelled in their first conceptions, often forgotten in their rapid progress; the true inspiration was lodged in their breasts, the hidden volcano has often burst through its darkness, and flamed through a whole scene, for often have they written as Shakespeare wrote. We may look in them for entire scenes, felicitous lines, and many an insulated passage, studies

* Bouterwek's Hist. of Spanish Lit. i. 128.

for a poet; anthologies have been drawn from these elder dramatists *. We may perceive how this sudden

* Two of these collections are to be valued.

"COTGRAVE'S *English Treasury of Wit and Language*, 1655." He neglected to furnish the names of the dramatic writers from whom he drew the passages. Oldys, with singular diligence, succeeded in recovering these numerous sources, which I transcribed from his manuscript notes. Oldys' copy should now repose in the library of Mr. Douce, given to the Bodleian.

A collection incomparably preferable to all preceding ones is "*The British Muse, or a Collection of Thoughts—Moral, Natural, or Sublime—of our English Poets who flourished in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, by THOMAS HAYWARD, *gent.*, 1732," in three volumes. It took a new title, not a new edition, as "The Quintessence of English Poetry." Such a title could not recommend itself. The prefatory matter was designed for a critical history of all these Anthologies, and was the work of Oldys; but it was miserably mangled by Dr. Campbell, then the Aristarchus of the booksellers, to save print and paper! Our literary antiquary has vented, in a manuscript note, his agony and his indignation. He had also greatly assisted the collector;—the circuit is wide and copious, and there is not a name of note which does not appear in these volumes. The ethical and poetic powers of our old dramatic poets, as here displayed, I doubt could be paralleled by our literary neighbours. We were a thoughtful people at the time that our humour was luxuriant—as lighter gaiety was from the first the national inheritance of France.

Of this collection, says Oldys, "Wherever you open it, you are in the heart of your subject. Every leaf includes many lessons, and is a system of knowledge in a few lines. The merely speculative may here find experience; the flattered, truth; the diffident, resolution, &c." For my part, I think of these volumes as highly as Oldys himself.

But what has occasioned the little success of these collections of single passages and detached beauties, like collections of proverbs,

generation of poets, some of whose names are not familiar to us, have moulded our language with the images of their fancy, and strengthened it by the stability of their thoughts.

---

is the confusion of their variety. We are pleased at every glance; till the eye, in weariness, closes over the volume which we neglect to reopen.

CHARLES LAMB'S "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets" is of deeper interest. He was a nobler workman, and he carries us on through whole scenes by a true unerring emotion. His was a poetical mind labouring in poetry.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE vicissitudes of the celebrity of Shakespeare may form a chapter in the philosophy of literature and the history of national opinions. Shakespeare was destined to have his dramatic faculty contested by many successful rivals, to fall into neglect, to be rarely acted and less read, to appear barbarous and unintelligible, to be even discarded from the glorious file of dramatists by the anathemas of hostile criticism; and finally, in the resurrection of genius (a rare occurrence!) to emerge into universal celebrity. This literary history of Shakespeare is an incident in the history of the human mind singular as the genius which it relates to. The philosopher now contemplates the phenomenon of a poet who in his peculiar excellence is more poetical than the poets of every other people. We have to track the course of this prodigy, and if possible to comprehend the evolutions of this solitary luminary. It is knowledge which finally must direct our feelings in the operations of the mind as well as in the phenomena of nature. We are conscious that even the anomalous is regulated by its own proper motion, and that there is nothing in human nature so arbitrary as

to stand by itself so completely insulated as to be an effect without a cause.

SHAKESPEARE is a poet who is always now separated from other poets, and the only one, except POPE, whose thoughts are familiar to us as household words. His eulogy has exhausted the language of every class of enthusiasts, the learned and the unlearned, the profound and the fantastical. The writings of this greatest of dramatists are, as once were those of Homer, a Bible whence we receive those other revelations of man, and of all that concerns man. There was no excess of wonder and admiration when HURD declared that "This astonishing man is the most original THINKER and SPEAKER since the days of HOMER."

The halo which surrounds the poetic beatitude has almost silenced criticism in its devotio ; but a literary historian may not at all times be present in the choir of votaries; his labours lie outwards among the progressive opinions of a people, nor is he free to pass over what may seem paradoxical if it lie in his way.

The universal celebrity of Shakespeare is comparatively of recent origin: received, rejected, and revived, we must ascertain the alternate periods, and we must look for the causes of the neglect as well as the popularity of the poet. We may congratulate ourselves on the numerous escapes of our national bard from the

oblivion of his dramatic brothers. The history and the works of Shakespeare, and perhaps the singularity of the poet's character in respect to his own writings, are some of the most startling paradoxes in literary history.

Malone describes Shakespeare as "the great poet whom nature framed to disregard the wretched models that were set before him, and to create a drama from his own native and original stores." This cautious but creeping commentator, notwithstanding that he had often laboured to prove the contrary, gaily shot this arrow drawn from the quiver of Dryden, who has delivered very contradictory notions of Shakespeare. Veritably—for we are now writing historically—Shakespeare never "created our drama, disregarding the wretched models before him;" far from this! the great poet had those models always before him, and worked upon them; no poet has so freely availed himself of the inventions of his predecessors, and in reality many of the dramas of Shakespeare had been written before he wrote.

It cannot be denied that our great poet never exercised his invention in the fables of his dramas; thus he spared himself half the toil of his work. He viewed with the prophetic eye of genius the old play or the old story, and at once discovered all its capabilities; he

saw at once all that it had and all that it had not; its characterless personages he was confident that he could quicken with breath and action, and that his own vein, allowed to flow along the impure stream, would have the force to clear the current, and to expand its own lucid beauty.

Had not the felicitous genius of our bard revelled in this facility of adopting and adapting the ready-made inventions of many a luckless playwright, we might have lost our Shakespeare; for he never wrote for us, but for his little theatre. He had no leisure to afford whole days in constructing plots for plays, nor much troubled himself with those which he followed closely even to a fault; nor did the quickness of his genius neglect a solitary thought, nor lose a fortunate expression. To what extent were these borrowings from old manuscript plays we cannot even surmise; we have one specimen of Shakespeare's free use of whatever the poet's judgment caught, in those copious passages which he transplanted from North's "Plutarch" and Holinshed's "Chronicles," lending their words his own music.

One of his commentators, George Steevens, published six old plays on which Shakespeare had grounded six of his own; but this rash act was in the early days of the commentatorship; Steevens must soon have dis-

covered the inconvenience of printing unreadable dramas, to exhibit the concealed industry of the mighty bard. The spells of Shakespeare did not hang on the artificial edifice of his fable; he looked abroad for mankind, and within his own breast for all the impulses of the beings of his imagination. All he required was a scene; then the whole "sphere of humanity," as Jonson expressed it, lie wide before him. There was a Jew before the "Merchant of Venice;" a shrew had been tamed before Katherine by Petruchio; a King Lear and his three daughters, before the only one the world knows; and a tragical Hamlet had philosophised like Seneca, as the satirical Nash told, before our Shakespeare's: but this list is needless, for it would include every drama he has left us. Even the beings of his creation lie before him in their embryon state. His creative faculty never required more than a suggestion. The prototype of the wonderful Caliban has not hitherto been discovered, but the fairies of the popular mythology become the creatures of his own imagination. Middleton first opened the incantations of "the witches." The Hecate of Middleton is a mischief-brooding hag, gross and tangible, and her "spirits, black, white, and grey," with her "devil-toad, devil-ram, devil-cat, and devil-dam," disturb their spells by the familiar drollery of their names, and their vulgar

instincts. Out of this ordinary domestic witchcraft the mightier poet raised "the weird sisters,"

> "That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
> And yet are on't,"

nameless, bodiless, vanishing shadows!

> "And what seemed corporal
> Melted as breath into the wind."

The dramatic personages which seem to me peculiar to Shakespeare, and in which he evidently revelled, serving his purposes on very opposite occasions, are his clowns and domestic fools. Yet his most famous comic personage, the fat knight, was the rich graft on the miserable scion of Sir John Oldcastle, in an old play; the slight hint of "a mere pampered glutton" was idealised into that inimitable variety of human nature combined in one man—at once so despicable and so delightful!

The life of our poet remains almost a blank, and his very name a subject of contention *. Of that singular genius who is now deemed the national bard, we can only positively ascertain that the place of his birth was that of his death; a circumstance which for a poet is some

* Posterity is even in some danger of losing the real name of our great dramatic poet. In the days of Shakespeare, and long after, proper names were written down as the ear caught the sound, or they were capriciously varied by the owner. It is not therefore strange that we have instances of eminent persons writing the names

evidence of his domestic prosperity; but the glorious interval of existence, how and all he performed on the

---

of intimate friends and of public characters in a manner not always to be recognised. Of this we are now furnished with the most abundant evidence, which was not sufficiently adverted to in the early times of our commentators.

The autographs we possess of our national bard are unquestionably written SHAKSPERE, according to the pronunciation of his native town; there the name was variously written,—even in the same public document,—but always regulated by the dialectical orthoepy. The marriage license of the poet, recovered in the Gent. Mag. for Sept. 1836, offers a striking evidence of the viciousness of the pronunciation and the utter carelessness with which names were written, for there we find it SHAGSPERE.

That the poet himself considered that the genuine name was SHAKESPEARE, accordant with his arms (a spear, the point upward), seems certain, notwithstanding his compliance with the custom of his county; for his "Rape of Lucrece," printed by himself in 1594, in the first edition bears the name of WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, as also does the "Venus and Adonis," that first heir of his invention; these first editions of his juvenile poems were doubtlessly anxiously scrutinised by the youthful bard. In the literary metropolis the name was so pronounced. Bancroft has this allusion in his Epigrams—"To Shakespeare:"—

> "Thou hast so used thy pen, or shook thy speare,
> That poets startle."—

The well-known allusion of Robert Greene, to a shake-scene, confirms the pronunciation. I now supply one more evidence—that of Thomas Heywood, the intimate of Shakespeare and his brother dramatists; he, like some others, has printed the name with a hyphen, which I transcribe from the volume open before me,—

> "Mellifluous Shake-speare,"
>
> *Hierarchie of Angels*, 206.

The question resolves itself into this—Is the name of our great

stage of human life, no one observed as differing from his fellows of the company, and he of all men the least; and of his productions, wherein we are to find every excellence to which any poet has reached, our scepticism is often at work to detect what is Shakespearian among that which cannot be.

Of the idle traditions of the youth of Shakespeare, Malone, after "foraging for anecdotes" during half a century, has painfully satisfied us, that all which so many continued to repeat was apocryphal. Having with his own eyes ascertained that Sir Thomas Lucy had no park, he closed with his famous corollary, that "therefore he could have no deer to be stolen." But other parks and other deer were liable to the mischance of furnishing venison for a young deer-fancier, to treat his friends; and Sir Thomas Lucy, probably, was Justice Shallow on this occasion to the poetic stripling. The other circumstances of the poet's early life, too well known to repeat, may stand on the same ground. Personal facts may come down to us confused, inaccurate, and mistaken, but they do not therefore necessarily rest on no foundation. The invention of such irrelevant circumstances seems to be without a motive; and

bard to descend to posterity with the barbaric curt shock of SHAKSPERE, the twang of a provincial corruption; or, following the writers of the Elizabethan age, shall we maintain the restoration of of the euphony and the truth of the name of SHAKESPEARE?

though the propagators of gossip are strange blunderers, they rarely aspire to be original inventors. We are not concerned with such tales, for there is nothing in them which is peculiar to the idiosyncrasy of the great poet.

The first noticeable incident in the life of Shakespeare was his marriage in 1582, in his eighteenth year; the nuptials of the poet seem an affair of domestic convenience, rather than a poetical incident in "the romance of life."

In 1586, being only twenty-two years of age, Shakespeare quitted home for the metropolis.

At this critical moment of his life, which Malone sought for in despair, we should have remained in darkness, had not the fortunate and intrepid industry of the most devoted enthusiast of the Shakespearian school lifted his steady torch *. Shakespeare arrived at the theatre not to hold the horses of gentlemen, as was so long reported, without, for he had a more friendly interest within, doors. There he joined a neighbour in his shire, Richard Burbage, who subsequently became the renowned actor of the future Shakespeare's creations; and likewise Thomas Green, his townsman, and no inferior actor and poet. It is hardly a conjecture to

* Mr. J. Payne Collier, in his "New Facts regarding the Life of Shakespeare."

presume that their friendly invitations had tempted our youthful adventurer to join their company. In three years Shakespeare obtained shares in the theatre, which multiplied every year, till he became the joint-proprietor with Burbage. The friendship of the actor and the dramatist was a golden bond, when each had conferred on the other their mutual popularity. The plays of Shakespeare were higher favourites with the public during the lifetime of this Garrick of the poet's own days; and the renowned actor was so charmed by his own success, that he perpetuated among his daughters the delightful name of Juliet, which reminded him, with pride, of his own exquisite Romeo.

Shakespeare proved a closer and a more refined observer of the art of acting than nature had enabled him to show himself as an actor, by practising his own professional precepts. Two actors, who long survived the poet, recorded that he had critically instructed the one to enact Hamlet, and the other Henry the Eighth *.

How an indifferent actor as Shakespeare was betrayed those latent dramatic faculties by which he was one day to be the delight of that stage which he could not tread, remains a secret which the poet has not told. But whether it was by accident or in some happy hour,

* Roscius Anglicanus.

we know not, that Shakespeare, in conning the manuscript of some wretched drama, felt the glorious impulse which prompted the pen to strike out whole passages, and to interpolate whole scenes; that moment was the obscure birth of his future genius. How he was employed at this unknown era of his life, the peevish jealousy of a brother of the craft has curiously informed us.

When Shakespeare was a name yet scarcely known, save to that mimetic world, tenanted by playwrights, it appears that he was there sustaining an active and secret avocation. The great bard had been serving a silent apprenticeship to the dramatic muse, by trying his hand on the old stock-pieces which lay in the theatrical treasury, and further venturing his repolishing touches on the new. Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele had submitted to his soft pencillings, or his sharp pruning-hook. The actors were often themselves a sort of poets, and would compete with those who were only poets; and in pricing the hasty wares, would often have them fashioned to their liking. Alluding to the treatment the dramatists were enduring from their masters, Robert Greene indignantly addressed his peers. This curious passage, first discovered by Tyrwhit, has been often quoted, and indispensably must be once more; for it tells us how Shakespeare, in 1592, had been fully employed within

six years of his arrival at the metropolis. Greene desires his friends would no longer submit to the actors. "Do not trust those burrs, who have sought to cleave to us all; those puppets that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I to whom they all have been beholding, is it not like that you to whom they all too have been beholding, shall, were ye in that case I am now, be both of them at once forsaken*? Yes, trust them not! There is *an upstart crow beautified with our feathers*, that with *his tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to *bombast*† *out a blank verse* as the best of you, and being *an absolute Johannes Factotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only SHAKE-SCENE in a country."

"The absolute Johannes Factotum," "the only shake-scene," and "the crow beautified with their feathers," are one person; but "the tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide," particularly points out that person. It is, in fact, a parody of a line composed by this batch of poets in one of their dramas, "the contention of the

* Greene was then lying on his last pallet of rhyme and misery, dictating this sad legacy of "a groat's worth of wit bought with a million of repentance."

† *Bombast* is not here used in the present application of the term —in a depreciating sense, but is taken from the original figure of the cotton used in stuffing out or quilting the fashionable dresses.

two houses of York and Lancaster;" and which, with many others, Shakespeare had wholly appropriated. In the third part of King Henry the Sixth, in Act I., Scene IV., it stands as Peele, or Greene, had originally composed it.

"O, tyger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide!"

This attack on our untiger-like Shakespeare, turns poor Greene into an enraged wasp, peevish and mortified at the Shakespearian hand, which had often larded his leanness, or scarified his tumidities. Greene charges Shakespeare with altering the plays of himself, Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele, and then claiming all the merit of the work *!

Our great bard was not insensible to the fancy of his querulous libeller, since it was on Greene's "Dorastus and Fawnia" Shakespeare founded his "Winter's Tale," as he took his "As You Like It" from Lodge's "Rosalynd," whose very name he preserved. Thus borrowing from the writings of his unfortunate and reckless brothers of Parnassus, he has made immortal works which have long expired.

The active employment of Shakespeare among the old plays was so well known at the time, that when his name became familiar to the public, the printers were

* Collier's "New Facts," 13. Dyce's edition of "Greene's Dramatic Works."

often eager to obtain the original neglected plays in their meagre condition, to avail themselves of the popularity of the Shakespearian rifacimentos. Fraud and deception were evidently practised on the uncritical readers. One of these cunning publishers issued the old play of "The Contention of the Two Houses," &c., as *newly corrected and enlarged* by William Shakespeare;" which was true as it was acted on the stage, but false in the copy of the elder dramatist which was republished. In this manner several plays not only bear the consecrating name of Shakespeare, but seven which are now discarded from his works appeared in the edition of Rowe; in some of these the hand of Shakespeare appears to have been discerned; and it has been suggested by Mr. Collier, an experienced critic in the history of the drama, that it is possible that all the plays of Shakespeare have not yet been given to the world.

In the second and third parts of King Henry the Sixth, for the first was placed in his volume merely to complete the historical series, Shakespeare made ample use of several dramas; and Malone, whose microscopic criticism obtained for him the sarcastic cognomen of *Minutius Felix*, by an actual scrutiny, which we may well believe cost him the most anxious pains, computed the lines of these dramas, and has passed his word, that

of six thousand and forty-three lines, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one were written by some author who preceded Shakespeare; two thousand three hundred and seventy-three were formed by him on the foundation laid by his predecessors, and one thousand eight hundred and forty-nine lines were entirely our poet's own composition. Malone has even contrived to distinguish them in the text; those which Shakespeare *adopted* are printed in the usual manner; the speeches which he *altered* or expanded, are marked by inverted commas; and to all the lines entirely *composed* by himself, asterisks are prefixed. A critical reader may derive a curious gratification by attending to this novel text of our national poet; the only dramatist to whom this singularity has ever occurred, and on whose writings this anomalous operation could have been performed.

Shakespeare was more conversant with these preceding dramatists, most of whose writings have perished, than we can ever discover; but it is fortunate for us that his creative faculties brooded over such a world of chaotic genius. He scrupled not to appropriate those happier effusions which were not only worthy of his own genius, but are not distinguishable from it. Sometimes he only re-touched, sometimes he nobly amplified, expanding a slight hint into some glorious pas-

sage, and elevating a creeping dialogue into an impassioned scene. His judgment was always the joint-workman of his fancy.

Who by the interior evidence could have conjectured that the following Shakespearian effusion, musical with his own music, was, in truth, a mere transcription from an old play of "Richard Duke of York," whose author remains unknown. I mark by italics the rejections of Shakespeare. In the slight emendations, we may observe that our poet consulted his ear; but in the first verse he has chosen a more expressive term.

——— "Doves will peck in *rescue* (safeguard) of their brood.
Unreasonable creatures feed their young;
And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,
Yet, in protection of their tender ones,
Who hath not seen them even with those *same* wings
Which *they have sometimes* used *in* fearful flight,
(Which sometime they have used with fearful flight,)
Make war with him that climb'd unto their nest,
Offering their own lives in their young's defence?"

The speech of Queen Margaret in the third part of Henry the Sixth, Act V. Scene IV., in the old play, consisted of a single metaphor included in twelve lines. The single metaphor was not rejected, but it is amplified and nobly sustained through forty lines in the Queen's animated address to her Lords:—

"The mast but now blown overboard,
The cable broke, the holding anchor lost, &c."

The two celebrated scenes in which the dead body of the murdered Duke of Gloster is placed before us, with such precision of horror, minutely appalling, and of the raving despair of Cardinal Beaufort so awfully depicted by his death, "making no sign," are splendours whose igniting sparks flew out of the ashes of old plays, one of "King John," and the other of "The Contentions of the Two Houses," and of the chronicles. But still these sublime descriptions and these fearful images are the inspirations of Shakespeare; their truth of nature, and the completeness of the purpose of the poet, the bare originals could not impart.

These ascertained evidences may suffice—it would be tedious to proceed with their abundance—of the studiousness and propriety of Shakespeare in his adoptions and adaptations of our earlier drama. Dr. Farmer was the first to discover that these plays were not written *originally* by Shakespeare; but that able researcher was not then aware of what only the progress of discovery could demonstrate, that hardly a single drama of our national bard can be deemed to have been of his own original invention.

While thus occupied in altering and writing old plays for his own theatre, in 1593 first appeared to the world the name of William Shakespeare in the dedication to the Earl of Southampton of his "Venus and

Adonis." The poet has called this poem, of a few pages, "the first heir of my invention." For him who had already written much, the expression is singular, and it looks like a tacit acknowledgment that the poet considered that the five or six plays which he had already set forth had really no claim to "*his* invention." And the dedication betrays the tremulousness of a virgin effort. "Should this first heir prove deformed," declared our poet in his own Shakespearian diction, "I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after *ear so barren a land,* for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest." The poet, doubtless, was induced to proceed, for the following year, 1594, produced his "Lucrece." He described his first poem as "unpolished lines;" and he still calls this second his "untutored lines." As the former, so likewise is the present dedicated to the same earl. The fervour of the style indicates the influence of the patron, and the singleness of the devotion of the poet, who tells his noble patron "What I have done is yours, and what I have to do is yours." The humble actor's intercourse with his noble friend is a remarkable incident, for the poet was not yet famous when he prefixed his name to these poems. This earl, then in his youth, we learn was attached to theatrical amusements; and it has been ingeniously conjectured that the princely donation of a thousand

pounds, which the peer presented to the poet, a tradition which Davenant had handed down, may have occurred, if it ever happened, in the interval between the publication of these two poems.

The Ovidian deliciousness of "Venus and Adonis," and the more solemn narrative of "Tarquin and Lucrece," early obtained celebrity among the youthful and impassioned generation. Shakespeare was long renowned as the amatory poet of the nation by many who had not learned to distinguish the bard among his dramatic brethren. Numerous editions of these poems confirm their popularity, and the public voice resounded from the lyres of many poets.

No poet more successfully opened his career than Shakespeare by these two popular poems; but it is remarkable that he made no farther essay with a view to permanent fame, which, as it would seem to us, he never imagined he was to derive from his dramas.

Meres, a critic of the day, has informed us that, in 1598, some sonnets by Shakespeare were in circulation among his friends. These were effusions of the hour; and, possibly, some may have been descriptive of his own condition. In 1599, a poetical collection called "The Passionate Pilgrim," appeared under the name of Shakespeare; and ten years afterwards another, entitled, "Shakespeare's Sonnets," was given to the

world; but as poetical miscellanies were formed in those days by publishers who were not nice in the means they used to procure manuscripts, it is quite uncertain what are genuine and what may be the composition of other writers in these collections.

In "The Passionate Pilgrim," some critics find difficulty in tracing the hand of the poet; and we accidentally discover by the complaint of Heywood, a congenial dramatist, that there were two of his poems in one edition of this collection; and we know that there were also other poems by Marlow and Barnefeld and others. Heywood tells us, that Shakespeare was greatly offended at this licentious use of his name *; but he must have been imperturbably careless on such matters, otherwise he would not have suffered three editions of this spurious miscellany.

The fate of "The Sonnets" is remarkable. Steevens boldly ejected them from the poet's works, declaring that the strongest act of parliament that could be framed could not compel their perusal. Shall we ascribe to this caustic wit a singular deficiency in his judicial decisions, or look to some other cause for the ejection of these sonnets which have become of late the subject of so much curious inquiry? An ingenious

* Heywood's "Apology for Actors."—The Epistle to his bookseller at the end.

attempt has been recently made to form what is called an autobiography of the poet by stringing together the sonnets in six distinct poems; this would be sufficient evidence that they had never passed under the eye of the author, and that he could have had no concern in a publication which has thus mutilated his living members. This bookseller's collection remains, for more than one cause, an ambiguous volume.

Shakespeare now stands alone the national bard; but hoary Time, which has decreed who are his inferiors, once saw them his equals; and when he mingled with his fellows, possibly the world looked up to a Coryphæus whose name was not Shakespeare. Two inquiries interest us: Was the pre-eminence of our national bard acknowledged by his contemporaries?—and, What cause occasioned the utter neglect of his own reputation?

Among his contemporaries, Shakespeare could not possess the pre-eminence of the present age, for who were then to be his judges? His rivals or his audience? Our gentle Shakespeare, as Jonson called him, perhaps at no time appreciated his own genius at its peculiar excellence, and therefore was not likely to discover his solitary pre-eminence among a formidable crowd of rivals, nor were they likely to acknowledge in their friend "Will" the prevailing charm which has

now subdued the world. They have even occasionally darted a shaft of ridicule or a sharp parody at our immortal tragedian; the madness of Hamlet and Ophelia could serve these dramatic writers as a subject for raillery *; and the airy Fletcher, who would have emulated Shakespeare, was guilty of sneering at his inimitable master. The learned JONSON was apt to be critical; CHAPMAN cast his Greek glances haughtily on the vernacular bard; MARSTON was caustic; and DRAYTON, his intimate, who had composed two or three tragedies, could hardly perceive any supremacy in SHAKESPEARE, and for us, seems parsimoniously to commend his "comic vein" as strong

"As any one that traffick'd with the stage;"

while BEN JONSON is hailed as

"Lord of the theatre, who could bear
The buskin, as the sock, away."

It was not from his dramatic brothers that SHAKESPEARE could have discovered his more than supremacy; and while the brotherhood had family quarrels among themselves, Shakespeare appears never to have moved offensively or defensively. Gifford tells us, that he has never mentioned one of his contemporaries with

* In the comedy of "Eastward Ho!" the joint production of Jonson, Marlowe, and Chapman,—Shakespeare is ridiculed, particularly the madness of Hamlet and Ophelia.

commendation, and only once appears, with Jonson and others, to have contributed some commendatory lines to the volume of an obscure and whimsical poet*. As Shakespeare did not deal in this literary traffic of that day, he has received fewer tributes than some of the meanest of our poets. But if Shakespeare has not noticed any of his associates, neither has the poet ever alluded to himself in his works. He never exults in his triumphs, nor is querulous on those who oppugned them.

With his audience he was unquestionably popular; we hear of none of his plays having been condemned, though such mischances are recorded of his rivals, and, above all, of his great compeer Jonson. We know that he was fortunate in the personation of his characters; and those natural touches, listened to on the spot when nature was left free to act her part, fell on contagious and instantaneous sympathies. But if the poet charmed by his "many-coloured life," his very faults were not less delightful. His audience revelled in bustle and bombast, and it is possibly in compliance

* Robert Chester, a fantastical versifier, whose volume is priced in the "Bib. Anglo-Poetica" at 50*l.*, but this price was too moderate; for, at the sale of Sir M. Sykes, some ingenious lover of absurd poetry willingly gave 61*l.* 19*s.* I have not yet seen this extraordinary production, and derive my knowledge only from a specimen in the catalogue.

with their stirring unchastised taste that we have received so much of his rude originals.

Our poet's recklessness of the fate of his own dramas, and his utter disregard of posterity, is at least one unquestionable fact in the blank page of his life. He was utterly reckless of his personal reputation among his contemporary readers, or otherwise he would not have suffered in his lifetime mutilated dramas, or even their first draughts, surreptitiously procured, to pass under his own name;—huddled pieces without even the divisions of the acts, or crude and ridiculous dramas which he was incapable of having written. These were suicidal acts of his own fame, but they never broke his silence; and even in his retreat from the metropolis, in the leisure of his native bowers of Avon, Shakespeare felt not

> "That last infirmity of noble minds,
> The spur of fame,"

pricking his patient acquiescence, and disturbing his careless freedom; he issued no protest, he uttered no complaint, against the effrontery of the printers of those days, who published, as "newly corrected by William Shakespeare," old plays which he never wrote; nor did he yield the yearnings of a nurse to those ricketty children of the press which passed as his progeny, bearing a name which he never could have deemde

immortal. We may trace to its real cause this utter carelessness of his poetical existence.

The horizon of this poet's hopes was bounded by his daily task and his prosperous theatre. Assuredly it was not an ordinary gratification to be conscious that his friend Burbage would call into a real existence Romeo, Macbeth, and Othello, and that the shares of the play-house would in due time be transferred for Warwick-shire acres. But his mind was above his condition, and however the dramatist flourished at "the Globe," Shakespeare himself felt the misery of a degraded station;—players and play-writing were held to be equally despicable in that day. This "secret sorrow" he may have himself confided to us; for in one of "the sonnets," he pathetically laments the compulsion which forced him to the trade of pleasing the public; and this humiliation, or this "stain," as the poet felt it, is illustrated by a novel image—"Chide Fortune," exclaims the bard,—

> "The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds;
> Thence comes it that *my name receives a brand;*
> *And almost thence my nature is subdued*
> *To what it works in*, LIKE THE DYER'S HAND."

SHAKESPEARE, in the vigour of life, withdrew from the theatre and the metropolis, returning to his native

abode*. "The properties and the wardrobe," were now exchanged for "land and tithes." It is consolatory for us to have ascertained that our national bard, not yet however national, did not participate in the common misery of his noblest brothers. Four years glided away in the tranquil obscurity of his family, till his death! Yet still some old associations survived with the dramatic bard, some reveries of the winter theatre of "the Blackfriers," and the summer Globe "open to the sky," for we are told that two or three of his noblest dramas were composed during his retirement; and he retained his unbroken love for old companionship to the last, for, by a credible tradition, Shakespeare died of a fever contracted by convivial indulgence at a joyous meeting with his beloved cronies Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton.

We hear nothing more of SHAKESPEARE nor of any fragmentary manuscripts; no verses were scattered on his funereal bier as with Spenser, no sepulchral volume of elegies was gathered, as with Jonson, to consecrate his memory. There was yet no SHAKESPEARE! no national bard! The poet himself could not have favoured a friend with a copy of many of his own plays, and probably could not himself have repeated one of those admired soliloquies which we now get by rote.

* In 1612 or 13.

SHAKESPEARE was wholly insensible to the days which were to come. All this to us seems incredible!

Seven years passed away silently, and the nation remained without their Shakespeare, although Jonson, in the very year that the poet had deceased, had set the first example of a collection of dramas made by their own author; the volume sanctioned by his critical learning he dignified as his "works:" a proud distinction by which he laid himself open to the epigrammatists. At length, in 1623, two of Shakespeare's fellow-comedians, Heminges and Condell, published the first folio edition of "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies."

These player-editors profess that "they have done this office to the dead only to keep the memory of so worthy a *friend and fellow* alive as was our Shakespeare." Yet their utter negligence shown in "their fellow's" volume is no evidence of their pious friendship, nor perhaps of their care or their intelligence. The publication was not, I fear, so much an offering of affection as a pretext to secure the copyright. Their real design seems to have been to recover the monopoly of ALL the plays, having lost the proprietorship of several which had *stolen abroad in Shakespeare's lifetime*, and to obtain this crafty purpose they practised a fraudulent deception.

Fifteen quarto plays the public already possessed; no one appears to have known how they had issued from the study of the poet, or the treasury of the theatre. Our player-editors, however, now cautioned their readers that these fifteen plays were a fraud practised on them; that "they were stolen and surreptitious copies maimed and deformed." But what these new editors themselves alleged, they knew was false; for they actually reprinted, unaltered, in their own collection these declared surreptitious copies. As the reprint became subject to their negligence, these *first editions* were appreciated by Capel and Malone as manuscripts, and by these quarto plays they corrected the text of the folio volume. The mystifying republication of these fifteen quarto plays is a piece of literary history of no common occurrence. CAPEL imagined that the player-editors merely reprinted these very copies which they had so loudly decried to save the labour of transcription. But looking closer into this affair, we seem to detect that a double deception was practised. The printers of these plays had secured the copyright by entering them at Stationers' Hall, and when the folio collection was projected it was found necessary by Heminges and Condell to admit the proprietors into the co-partnership of the volume. Hence their names appear in the title-page. Malone imagined that this

circumstance indicated that the volume of Shakespeare was considered so great a risk that it required the joint aid of these printers. But the parties only united to secure the monopoly of all the plays.

It therefore results that the player-editors pretended to warn the public that all the preceding editions were "maimed and deformed," and the proprietors of these pretended surreptitious editions silently acquiesced in their own condemnation, for the future advantages they expected to derive from their share in the monopoly.

It is quite obvious that the first proprietors of the quarto plays could never have acquired such complete copies without either Shakespeare or his company having furnished them. Yet Shakespeare, if he had connived at these publications, could never have revised the press; another evidence of the utter recklessness of the poet of the fate of his dramas.

The player-editors supplied about twenty new dramas, and by another adroit deception in their title-page they announced that all the dramas were NOW published "according to the original copies."

Alas! where were these "original copies?" The precious autographs could not have endured through many a season the thumbings of "the book-holder" or the prompter. The playhouse copies, carelessly written out in parts for the actors, interpolated with whole

scenes, spurious with ribaldry, and extemporaneous nonsense at the caprice of some favourite actor, corrupt with false readings, obscure with distorted alterations, and often omissions of a line or half a line to connect or to complete the sense, verse lurking in prose, and metre without feet—such were the original sins of the copies despatched in haste to a rapid press, and the writings of Shakespeare come before the world in these hurried proofs from printers among whom a corrector of the press seems to have been unknown. It is in this prolific soil of weeds that many are still too curiously seeking for the genuine text of Shakespeare, perhaps too often irretrievable*. The recollections of these two

* Most of our old plays come before us in a corrupt and mangled state. They were often imperfectly caught by the scribe, or otherwise surreptitiously obtained; hurried through the press from some illegible manuscript by a careless printer, who would throw three distinct speeches into the mouth of one character, transpose the names of the dramatis personæ, and omit the change of scene; while others again with indiscriminate fidelity, from a stolen transcript of the prompter's book, preserved his private memorandums and directions in the stage-copy. Even in the first folio of Shakespeare, so absent from their work were the player-editors, that "tables and chairs" are introduced to direct the property-man, or the scene-shifters, to be in readiness. Verse is printed as prose, to save the expenditure of those small blank spaces which divide those two regions of genius. The dramatists themselves, who probably conceived that they had consigned all their property in their vended plays, never read their own proof-sheets. The reader may form a clear conception of the injuries inflicted on these writers by the existing presentation copy of Massinger's "Duke of Milan," in which may be seen how the

players were so inaccurate that they at first totally omitted the "*Troilus and Cressida*," which is inserted

poet, after its publication, indignantly corrected the multiplied and the strange errata. The printer gave this text—

"Observe and honour her as if the SEAL
Of woman's goodness only dwelt in hers."

The poet corrected, the SOUL. The sagacity of an English Bentley could hardly have conjectured the happy emendation; only the poet himself could have supplied it.

Again the printer's text runs—

"From any lip whose HONOUR writ not Lord."

The poet corrected, whose OWNER.

These errors of the press are far more important to the readers of Shakespeare than many suspect. "Who knows," exclaimed the acute Gifford, "whether much of the ingenious toil to explain nonsense in the variorum edition of Shakespeare is not absolutely wasted upon mere *errors of the press?*" Not long after this was said, an actual experiment of the kind was made by a skilful printer. This person, during the leisure of eleven years of a French captivity, had found his most constant companion in a Shakespeare*. By his own experience of the blunders and the mischances of the typographer, to which we may add also a little sagacity, he recovered some of the lost text. His new readings were accompanied by an explanation of those mechanical accidents which had caused these particular errata. The practical printer mortified the haughty commentator by several felicitous and obvious emendations. The grave brotherhood of black-letter looked askance on such humble ingenuity, and turned against the simple printer. Unluckily for ZACHARY JACKSON, he had the temerity, in the flush of success, of abandoning his type-work to err in "the dalliance of fancy"

* So numerous were the English prisoners in France during the persecuting war of Napoleon, and so general was the demand for a Shakespeare, that more than one edition, I think, was printed by the French booksellers, which I have seen on their literary stalls.

without pagination, and with little discrimination in the writings of Shakespeare, preserved the barbarous "Titus Andronicus," evidently one of Marlowe's gigantic pieces, and the old play of "the first part of Henry the Sixth;" but it is by no means certain that not less than twenty other dramas had various degrees of claims to be included in the works of Shakespeare; such as the suspicious Pericles*. But the incompetence of these player-editors, even in transcribing from the prompter's copies, was not their only fault. "Will" was but "their fellow;" time had not hallowed him into the national poet; and they themselves had formed no elevated conception of the art of Sophocles and Terence; for in their dedication to two peers they express their fear whether their noble patrons from "their greatness would *descend to the reading of* SUCH TRIFLES;" the immortal writings! These unhappy editors seem to reflect back to us the humiliated feelings of Shakespeare and the age on the histrionic art.

---

into an ambitious Commentary of "seven hundred passages," when seventy had exceeded his fair claim. The commentating printer therefore met with the fate of the immortalised cobbler who ventured to criticise beyond the right measure of his last.

* Collier's "Poet. Decameron," i. 52. STEEVENS thought "The Yorkshire Tragedy" to be Shakespearian; and the Rev. ALEXANDER DYCE, struck by the Shakespearian soliloquy of the Wife, decides that "it contains passages worthy of his pen."—*Dyce's Mem. of Shakespeare*, xxxi.

In that early epoch of our literature the sock and buskin had indeed been worn by a reckless race.

Charles the First was a lover of the English drama. The king delighted to explore into the manuscript plays which were laid before the master of the revels for his license. Milton has acquainted us that the writings of Shakespeare formed the favourite studies of the monarch*. In the Iconoclastes, alluding to those writers who have shown the characteristic religious hypocrisy of tyrants, Milton observes, "I shall not instance an abstruse author wherein the king might be less conversant, but one whom we well know was the CLOSET COMPANION of these his solitudes, William Shakespeare."

This has been considered as a designed reproach, and we are startled by such a style from the author of Comus and of Samson Agonistes. The odious distinction of not referring the king to an abstruse author seems a palpable sneer at the course of the king's reading, who however was not deficient in learning; and in making the king's "closet companion" Shakespeare, Milton too well knew that he was casting the deepest

* That Shakespeare was the favourite poet of Charles the First is confirmed to the eyes of posterity; for on the copy the king used, he has written his own name, and left other traces of his pen; the volume now bears also the autograph of George the Third. It is preserved, it is hoped, in the library of the sovereigns of England.

odium on the royal character, for to this poet's then masters, the puritanical faction, there could be nothing less to be forgiven than a king, and a king in his imprisonments, mockingly here called "these his solitudes," than to be a play-reader! The slur, the gibe, and the covert satire are, I fear, too obvious. I would gladly have absolved our great bard from this act of treason at least against the majesty of Shakespeare's genius*. Milton had more deeply studied Shakespeare than any king whatever; but at this moment his literature was to be stretched on the torture of his politics.

In the history of the celebrity of Shakespeare, this day of royal favour sank amid the national tempest; and the theatre was abolished with the throne.

With the Restoration, the drama returned to the people. Half a century only had elapsed since our poet flourished; but in that half-century, our style, with our manners and modes of feeling, had suffered

* Milton, however, has been misinterpreted by some modern critics; when, on this occasion, having quoted that passage in Richard the Third which displays his hypocrisy, Milton adds—"*Other stuff of this sort* may be read throughout the whole tragedy, wherein the poet used not much license in departing from the truth of history." Pye, in his "Commentary on the Poetic of Aristotle," is indignant at the language of Milton. He takes the term "stuff" in its modern depreciating sense; but it had no such meaning with Milton, it merely signified *matter*. Pye exclaims—"Could Milton have imagined that *the stuff* of Mr. William Shakespeare would be preferred to 'Comus' and the 'Samson Agonistes?'"—212.

the vicissitudes of a revolution. If in the reign of Charles the First they perceived a change in the language from that of Elizabeth, that change was more apparent when, in retrograding, it was reduced to the indigent nakedness of the Puritanic period, and then, bursting into an opposite direction, like

"Stars shot madly from their spheres,"

was mottled by the modern Gallic in phrase and in criticism, corrupting our national taste, and thus removing us still further from the Shakespearian diction in idiom and in imagery. A great master of language, Dryden, confesses he found Shakespeare almost as difficult as old Chaucer.

On the restored theatre, "the renowned Jonson," thus distinguished by Shadwell, retained his supremacy in "The Fox," "The Silent Woman," and "The Alchemist;" and the airy and loose Fletcher was popular, being considered by this new generation as having drawn the characters of gentlemen more to their humour than his grave predecessors. One of the first managers was Davenant: to his partiality, for he was eager to acknowledge Shakespeare his father, both in blood and in verse, we may ascribe the revival of that poet's plays. Dryden has told that it was Davenant who first taught him to appreciate our national bard;

they were caught by the fancy of the poet; but the great ethical preceptor of mankind had never entered into their contemplation; and thus Macbeth shrank into an opera, under the hand of Davenant; and the Tempest, after having been seemingly burlesqued by duplicate characters of Miranda, Ferdinand and Caliban, by Davenant and Dryden together, was turned into an opera by Shadwell, and exhibited as if it were a pantomime, depending now on popular favour for new dresses, new music, and new machinery. Romeo and Juliet was altered by the Honourable James Howard, Dryden's brother-in-law, to introduce a happy conclusion: however, it is but justice to the town to record that they were so firmly divided in opinion on the catastrophe, that it was alternately played as tragedy and tragic-comic. We may fairly conclude by these profanations, that the true taste for our national bard had passed away*.

---

* I derive my knowledge from the "*Roscius Anglicanus*" of Downes, the prompter; it is a meagre chronicle, and the scribe is illiterate; but the edition by F. Waldron, 1784, is an addition to our literary history. Though chiefly dramatic, it abounds with some curious secret history. Waldron, himself an humble actor, was however a sagacious literary antiquary; but his modesty and failure of encouragement impeded his proposed labours. Gifford found him intelligent when that critic was busied on Jonson; and I possess an evidence of his acute emendations.

By this chronicle of our drama it appears that in a list of fifteen

Evelyn is a literary man, whose judgment has its value; and assuredly, he records the taste of the court-circle. In 1661 he saw "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, played; but now, *the old plays begin to disgust this refined age*, since his majesty has been so long abroad." Pepys, his contemporary, was a play-haunter; and how he relished "The Midsummer Night's Dream," with all its beautiful fancy, appears by his firm opinion, that "it was the most insipid, ridiculous play he had ever seen." Macbeth, though "a deep tragedy, had a strange perfection in a *divertisement*;" that is, Macbeth was Davenant's opera, with music and dancing. But Pepys *read* Othello, and we have his deliberate notion; "but having lately read the Adventures of Five Hours, Othello seemed a mean thing!" It is clear from these, and there are other as remarkable instances, that their ideas of the drama had wholly changed; that Nature and Fancy had retired from the stage, to give precedence to what are called "Heroic Tragedy," and comedies of Intrigue.

Shakespeare's plays, in a great measure, were banished the stage; but we may presume that Shakespeare still preserved some readers, though not critical

stock plays there are seven of Beaumont and Fletcher, three of Jonson, and three of Shakespeare. In another list of twenty-one plays there are *five* of Jonson, and but *one* of Shakespeare and the "Titus Andronicus."

ones, for four years after the Restoration, the third edition of Shakespeare in 1664, with seven additional dramas, one of which, "The Yorkshire Tragedy," had been printed with his name in his lifetime, was given to the world.

Leaving the theatre, and its moody humours of the populace, let us turn to those who think in their closet. How did such critics arbitrate? We can have no judge more able than the learned author of Hudibras,—"The quickest apprehensions, and aptest geniuses to any thing they undertake, do not always prove *the greatest masters* in it, for there is more patience and phlegm required in those that attain to any degree of perfection, than is commonly found in the temper of *active and ready wits that soon tire, and will not hold out.*" Butler instances Virgil, who wanted much of that natural easiness of wit that Ovid had, "did, nevertheless, with hard labour and long study, arrive at a higher perfection, than the other, with all his dexterity of wit, but less industry, could attain to. The same we may observe of JONSON and SHAKESPEARE, for he that *is able to think long and judge well, will be sure to find out better things than another man can hit upon suddenly, though of more quick and ready parts;* which is commonly but CHANCE, and the other wit and judgment*."

* Butler's Genuine Remains, ii. 494.

After this long extract, it is quite evident that with a predilection for Shakespeare, alive at times to his true touches of nature, BUTLER could not at that day take a comprehensive view of the faculties of the great Bard. What we deem his intuitive faculty seemed but "chance"; that could only "hit suddenly;" that prodigality of genius, the marvels which modern criticism has revealed to its initiated—was an advent—the day had not yet come! Butler perceived the electrical strokes of Shakespeare; but the mental shadowings—and the oneness—which rose together in the creation of a Macbeth, a Hamlet, a Lear, was a philosophical result, which probably no one had yet dreamed of.

If the genius of SHAKESPEARE were neglected, it was also destined to be arraigned and condemned.

Critical learning was yet new in our Literature; it had taken its birth in Italy, among a crowd of philosophers, rhetoricians and philologists, busied in developing the true principles of every species of literary composition. The academy *Della Crusca* was a tribunal, and the Poetic of Aristotle commented on by the renowned Castelvetro was a code, which was chiefly directed to the dramatic art. Our airy neighbours, whose national theatre at its beginning had much resembled our own in its freedom and originality, at the erection of the famous French Academy, evidently

in imitation of the Cruscan, with the great cardinal at its head, surrendered to the Greeks and to Aristotle. Everything now was to be as it had been, and every work, whatever might be its genius, was to be strictly modelled by certain arbitrary decisions; and all tragedies were to be written according to the humour of that ancient people, the Greeks, with their choruses,—and regulated by the severe unities of time and place and action! Bossu set down his prescriptions to compound an Epic, and Père Rapin, in his "Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poetry," dictated "Universal Rules" for all sorts of poetry. RYMER, the collector of our Fœdera, in his earlier days, was an excellent scholar, and cultivated elegant Literature. He translated this very work of Père Rapin, to which he prefixed an ingenious critical preface on comparative poetry. Enraptured by Grecian tragedy, and vivacious with French criticism, and moreover sanguine with an elevated conception of a certain forthcoming tragedy, which was to appear "a faultless piece" among our own monstrous dramas, Rymer grasped the new and formidable weapon of modern criticism. Armed at all points with a Grecian helmet and a Gallic lance, this literary Quixote sallied forth to attack all the giants, or the windmills, of the English theatre.

Now appeared "*The Tragedies of the last Age*

examined by the Practice of the Ancients. 1678." This explosion entirely fell on three of Fletcher's plays*. This critical bomb was learned and lively. The court, and consequently the popular, tastes were classical or Gallic; RYMER haunted St. James's, and soon became one of "their majesties' servants." He had formed the most elevated conception of the dramatic art, and that tragedy was a poem for kings; and he tells, that the poets who first brought tragedy to perfection were made vice-roys.

"The poetry of the last age," the age of Elizabeth, he considered was "rude as our architecture," and he detected the cause in our utter "neglect of the Poetic of Aristotle, on which all the great men in Italy had commented, before on this side of the Alps we knew of the existence of such a book."

This critic-poet,—for unluckily for Aristotle, Rymer resolved on being both,—had a notion that "though it be not necessary that all heroes should be kings, yet undoubtedly all crowned heads should be heroes;" this was a prerogative of the crown never to be invaded by any parliament of poets. This passive obedience in the critical art was perfume in "the royalty" of a dedication to Charles the Second, preparatory of the writer's own legitimate tragedy of "Edgar, or the English

* "Rollo," "King and No King," and "The Maid's Tragedy."

Monarch," in rhymed verse; and the first inroad of his critical demolition was to expose "the barbarisms" of Milton's blank! Rymer was as intrepid as he was enterprising. He composed his tragedy on the principles which he advocated, and the result was precisely what happened to the Abbé d'Aubignac, who wrote on the same system. Undoubtedly, he congratulated himself on the perfection of the clock-work machinery of his legitimate drama, where he had inviolably preserved the unities, for the action begins about one o'clock at noon, and the catastrophe closes at ten at night! He would have been right by "Shrewsbury clock." To the audience, however, the "long hour" might have seemed much longer than the delightful "Winter's Tale" of Shakespeare, which includes the events of twenty years!

The formidable critique, not the tragedy, made a great sensation; many were on the side of the stout Aristotelian, though some might deem that little mercy had tempered his justice. Dryden prepared an answer, for we have its heads; but he seems to have been awed by the critic's learning, for he never proceeded, and at a later day Rymer was a critic quite after Pope's own heart on our ancient drama*. Some years after, the

* We may listen to Pope:—S. "Rymer is a learned and strict critic!"—P. "Ay, that's exactly his character. He is generally

critique was honoured by a second edition, and in the following year, this *combat à l'outrance* was again waged, with no diminished intrepidity, in "*A Short View of Tragedy, with some reflections on* SHAKESPEARE, *and other* PRACTITIONERS *for the stage.* 1693." This, notwithstanding the offensive theme, is replete with curious literature, and some original researches in Provençal poetry.

"Rymer is the worst critic that ever lived." Such is the warm decision of an eloquent modern critic*. But in taste, as well as in more serious affairs, every age is governed by opinions. A mechanical critic then seemed mathematically irrefutable. Judging an English drama by the practice of the ancients, his triumph was easy. This scholastic doctrine, however, proved too subtle for the English people, and even the learned themselves in time looked up to nature. The philosophy of criticism, that is, of the human mind, was then imperfectly comprehended. A critic will be no longer safe who has nothing by heart but canons of criticism. The curious "Tracts" of RYMER are a memorable evidence how a learned critic, deprived of native susceptibility, may distort the noblest productions, by coarse jocularity and that

right, though rather too severe in his opinion of the particular plays he speaks of; and is, on the whole, one of the best critics we ever had."—*Spence's Anecdotes*, 172.

* Edinburgh Review, Sept. 1831.

malice of criticism—ridicule! He calls "Othello" "the tragedy of the pocket-handkerchief." That beautiful incident Shakespeare had found in Cynthio's novel, and probably intuitively felt how casualties, small as this one, in human affairs may become associated with our highest passions. Rymer only exposed the poverty of his imagination when, with a morsel of Quintilian, he would demonstrate this incident to be "too small a matter to move us in tragedy, much like Fortunatus' purse and the invisible cloak, long ago worn threadbare, and stowed up in the wardrobe of obsolete romance." With Othello's tragic tale before him, the critic worms himself into "the burlesque or comic parts," and these he insidiously lauds, to insinuate that "Othello" is but "a bloody farce." The blending of the comic and the serious in the same character, as in that of Iago, as often we find it in the many-coloured scenes of human life, was an artful mixture too potent and poisonous in the cup of mechanical criticism. There is a strange malignant drollery, a bitter pleasantry in the villanous Iago, as in the scene where he alarms Brabantio for the fate of his daughter, which to "the heroic" dramatist, who could only move on stilts, was mistaken for "farce," and not comprehended in his narrow views of human nature.

Rymer however was a ripe scholar, and the founder

in our literature of what has been considered as the French or the classical school of criticism, and he has won the unlucky distinction of being designated as "Shakespeare's critic!" In Dryden's prologue to "Love Triumphant" there is an allusion which Sir Walter Scott could not assign to any individual, though he acutely suspected it had a reference to some person: Sir Walter at that moment forgot Rymer and his "heroic tragedy." The lines are now very significant.

> "To SHAKESPEARE'S CRITIC, he bequeaths the curse,
> *To find his faults*, and yet HIMSELF MAKE WORSE *."

The uncertain criticisms of Dryden on Shakespeare were often dictated by the impulse of the moment, and stand in strange opposition to each other. At one happy time, indeed, he exclaimed, "I admire Jonson, but I love Shakespeare;" but he had not dived into the spirit of the poet, else we should not have had the strong censure of a "lethargy of thought for whole scenes together;" we should not have heard of "the

* The fate of Rymer's Tragedy has been illustrated by the inimitable humour of Addison in No. 592 of "The Spectator." Describing different theatrical properties, he says—"They are provided with above a dozen showers of snow, which, as I am informed, are the plays of many unsuccessful poets artificially cut and shredded for that use. Mr. Rymer's 'Edgar' is to fall in snow at the next acting of 'King Lear,' in order to heighten, or rather to alleviate, the distress of that unfortunate prince, and to serve by way of decoration to a piece which that great critic has written against."

bombast speeches of Macbeth;" nor that "the historical plays, 'The Winter's Tale,' and 'Measure for Measure,' are so meanly written, that the comedy neither caused your mirth, nor the serious part your concernment."

Dryden, however great as a poet, was deficient in passion, whose natural touches he acknowledged he had found in Otway. In his earliest pieces, while enamoured of the false taste of his heroic tragedies, it is certain he had formed little relish for nature and Shakespeare, which, at a later period of life, he seems to have been more open to.

In 1681, the poet laureate, Nahum Tate, was so little acquainted with Shakespeare, that "Lear" being brought to his notice, he found it a treasure, a heap of jewels unstrung and unpolished; and having had "the good fortune to light upon an expedient to rectify it," he brought it on the stage.

Shakespeare was now out of fashion, and a man of fashion aimed a last and mortal blow. The noble author of the "Characteristics" anathematised "the Gothic model of poetry." He told the nation that "the British muses were in their infant state, without anything of shapeliness or person, lisping in their cradles, with stammering tongues which nothing but their youth and rawness can excuse." Our dramatic SHAKESPEARE and our epic MILTON are among these venerable

bards, "*rude as they were according to their time and age.*" The classical pedant had, however, the sagacity to perceive that they have provided us with "the richest ore." Nature and Shakespeare lifted not their veil to the cold artificial soliloquist whose faint delicacy bred its own sickliness, and who, in the march and glitter of his external pomp, only betrayed the internal failure of his vigour.

The fourth and last folio edition of Shakespeare appeared in 1685. The poet again was locked up in a huge folio for the following twenty-five years, when, in 1709, he was freed by Rowe, who now gave him to the world at large in a more current form, which would meet the eye of the many*.

* On the play-bills of that day I find the modern dramas of "Cato," "The Conscious Lovers," and Cibber's and Farquhar's plays are simply announced, while the elder dramatists have accompanying epithets, which show the degree of their celebrity according, at least, to the director of the bills; and perhaps indicate the necessity he was under to remind the public, who were not familiar with the titles of these old plays. Thus appear "The Silent Woman, a Comedy by the *famous* Ben Jonson;" "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, written by the *immortal* Shakespeare;" "The Soldier's Fortune, written by the late *ingenious* Mr. Otway." Though Shakespeare bears away the prize among these epithetical allotments, I suspect that his *immortality*—here positively assigned to him—was owing to the honour of the recent edition by Rowe.

In 1741 the theatre seems to have recommended the dramas of Shakespeare for the variety of their *historical subjects*. On one of these bills "Richard the Third" is described as "containing the

The appearance of Rowe's edition at least placed the volumes in the hands of Steele and Addison, and possibly it formed their first studies of this poet. Whoever will take the pains to examine their popular papers may discover the fruits of their first thoughts. Steele at first seems to have derived his knowledge of Shakespeare from the plays as they were represented; he quotes Macbeth by memory very faultily in the famous exclamation of Macduff, and seems quite unconscious of the character of Lady Macbeth, and indeed notices that all the female characters of Shakespeare make "so small a figure*." As we proceed, we discover him more deeply read and more familiar with the poet's language. It was not to be hoped, from Addison's colder fancy and classical severity, that the Elizabethan poet could transport this critic by his inexhaustible imagery and a diction which paints the passions as well as reveals them. The prosaic genius of Addison, which had produced a frigid "Cato," could hardly fathom the depth of the mightier soul. He pronounced Shakespeare "very faulty in hard

distresses of King Henry the Sixth; the murder of young King Edward the Fifth and his brother in the Tower; the landing of the Earl of Richmond, and the death of King Richard in the memorable battle of Bosworth, being the last that was fought between the Houses of York and Lancaster; with many other true historical passages."

* Tatler—42.

metaphors and forced expressions," and he joins Shakespeare and Nat Lee as instances of the false sublime*. Pope's idea was similar, in his conversation, not in his preface; and later so was Thomas Warton's†.

In 1718, Bysshe, in compiling his "Art of Poetry," which consists of mere extracts, passed by "Spenser and the poets of his age, because their language has become so obsolete that most readers of our age have no ear for them, and therefore SHAKESPEARE is so rarely cited in this collection."

Rowe silently corrected his unostentatious edition; when fifteen years had elapsed, Tonson called on a greater poet to succeed to the editorial throne. The classical taste of Pope was disturbed and rarely sympathised with "the choice of the subjects, the wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forced expressions:" in tenderness to Shakespeare these he held to be "not so much defects, but superfœtations," which are to be ascribed to the times, to interpolation, to the copyists; and contemning "the dull duty" of editorship, he initiated himself into the novel office of expurgator; striking out or inserting at pleasure—not only pruning, but grafting. Schlegel exclaims in agony, that Pope would have given us a mutilated Shakespeare! but Pope, to satisfy us that he was not

* Spectator—39, 285. † V. iv. 186.

insensible to the fine passages of Shakespeare, distinguished by inverted commas all those which he approved! So that Pope thus furnished for the first time what have been called "The *Beauties* of Shakespeare!" but amid such a disfigured text, the *faults* of Shakespeare must have been too apparent! Pope but partially relished and often ill understood his Shakespeare, yet in the liveliest of prefaces he offers the most vivid delineation of our great bard's *general characteristics*. The *genius of Shakespeare* was at once comprehended by his brother-poet, but *the text* he was continually tampering with ended in a fatal testimony that POPE had no congenial taste for the style, the manner, and the whole native drama of England*. POPE laid himself open to the investigating eye of THEOBALD.

The attention of THEOBALD had been drawn to our old plays by THOMAS COXETER, an enthusiast of our

* Pope said that "it was mighty simple in Rowe to write a play now, professedly in Shakespeare's style, that is, the style of a bad age!" He relished as little Milton's "high style," as he called it. "The high style would not have been borne even in Milton, had not his subject turned so much on such strange out-of-the-world things as it does." Lord Shaftesbury would furnish a code of criticism in the days of Pope, when "the Gothic model" was proscribed by such high authorities. But Pope expressed unqualified approbation for the stately but classical "Ferrex and Porrex," and occasioned Spence to reprint it;—a tragedy in the unimpassioned style and short breathings of the asthmatic Seneca.

ancient dramatists. This Coxeter was the original projector of their revival, but having communicated his plan, he witnessed the incompetent DODSLEY appropriate this fond hope of his dreamy life, and he has left us his indignant groans*.

After an interval of seven years Theobald gave his edition. His attempts were limited to the emendation of corrupt passages and the explanation of obscure ones: the more elevated disquisitions to develope the genius of his author, by principles of criticism applied to his beauties or his defects, he assigned to "a masterly pen." This at least was not arrogant; the man who is sensible of his own weakness, is safe by not tasking it to the proof. His annotations are amusing

* COXETER, after a search of thirty years, faithfully collating the best of our old plays, tells us he happened to communicate his scheme to one who now invades it; but for what mistakes and confusion may be expected from the medley now advertising in ten volumes, he appeals to the "Gorboduc" which Spence had published by the desire of Pope; both these wits, and the future editor of "Old Plays," Dodsley, had used the spurious edition! Coxeter's judgment was prophetic in the present instance. "Dodsley's Collection" turned out to be a chance "medley;" unskilled in the language and the literature and the choice of his dramatists, he, as he tells us, "by the assistance of a little common sense set a great number of these passages right;" that is, the dramatist of the dull "Cleone" brought down the ancient genius to his own, and, if he became intelligible, at least he was spurious. If, after all, some parts were left unintelligible, the reader must consider how many such remain in Shakespeare.

from the self-complacency of the writer, who at times seems to have been struck by his own felicitous results; and in truth he was often successful, more than has been honestly avowed by those who have poached on his manor. Theobald exulted over Pope, but he read his triumph in "The Dunciad!"

The Popeians now sunk the sole merit of the laborious sagacity of "the restorer," as Mr. Pope affectionately called him, to that of "a word-catcher." But "piddling Theobald," branded in the forehead by the immortal "Dunciad," was the first who popularised the neglected writings of Shakespeare*. His editions dispersed thirteen thousand copies, while nearly a third of Pope's original subscription edition, of seven hundred and fifty copies, were left unvendible†.

---

* A third edition lies before me, 1757. The preface of the first edition of 1733 was much curtailed in the second of 1740, as well as the notes—particularly those which Theobald describes as "rather verbose and declamatory, and so notes merely of ostentation." The candour is admirable. The third edition seems a mere reprint of the second. The first edition is also curious for its plates preserving the *costume* or dress of the characters at the time.

† This was one of those literary secrets which are only divulged on that final day of judgment which happens to authors when, on the decease of their publishers, those literary cemeteries, their ware-rooms, open for the sale of what are called "their effects;" but which, in this instance of literary property, may be deemed "the ineffectual effects." At the sale of "the effects" of Tonson, the great bibliopolist, in 1767, one hundred and forty copies of Pope's "Shake-

It is an evidence of the spread of Shakespeare's celebrity, that a fashionable circle had formed themselves into a society under the title of "The Shakespeare Club." Every week they bespoke some favourite play; but, unexpectedly, the *acted plays* of Shakespeare seemed to lose greatly of their secret magic: this failure was charged upon the unhappy performers; whose skill appeared all unequal to raise the emotions which the bard had inspired in the closet. Certain it is, that for the full comprehension of the genius of this great poet, we must learn to think, to reflect, to combine, for what has passed is a part of what is going on; and this is a labour more adapted for the repose of the closet, than the business of the theatre. Much is written which must remain in the mind, and cannot come within the province of acting. The dramas of Shakespeare, as they have descended to us, modern taste also has always required to be altered and adapted; they are less calculated for performance on the stage than those of almost any other dramatist who has become classical in the theatre. Unquestionably, the great poet had retained much of the barbarism of the old plays which he re-wrote without re-modelling; bustle which hurries on

---

speare," in six volumes quarto, for which the original subscribers paid six guineas, were disposed of at sixteen shillings only per set. —*Gent. Mag.* lvii. 76.

our attention without stimulating our feelings; some flagrant indecorums and some absolute nonsense to the taste of "the groundlings of the Globe." In the reverie of the poet's pages, the eye glides silently over the offending passages which cannot detain it. It was these prominent defects which provoked so many modern alterations; and, no doubt Tate and Cibber, and all that race, exulted like Shadwell, who in his dedication to his alteration of Timon of Athens exclaims, "I can truly say I have made it into a play." When Sir James Mackintosh observed, that "Massinger's taste, as Shakespeare's genius, is displayed with such prodigal magnificence in the *parts*, but never employed in the construction of the whole," he was, perhaps, not aware of the real cause, which was that of our great poet following the construction of old plays, without altering their ordonnance. It is true also, that the characters of Shakespeare require something of his own genius in their personifiers to sustain the perfect illusion; great actors seem always to have felt the deep emotions they raised; they studied, they meditated, till at length they personified the ideal character they represented. We are told this of Burbage and Betterton, and we know it of Garrick and Mrs. Siddons.

A novel fate was now to befal Shakespeare. Theobald had made his volumes useful for all hands; a man of

rank, who had been the Speaker of the House of Commons, set the first example of literary magnificence. Sir THOMAS HANMER had cradled his fancy in the idealism of publication; his edition was to be not only "the fairest impression, beautified with the ornaments of sculpture," but it was not to be *sold* by booksellers! The Shakespeare of Sir Thomas Hanmer seemed to be a sacred thing, like the shew-bread of ancient Israel, to be touched by no profane hand, nor eaten but by an exclusive class. He made a gratuitous donation of his "sculptured" edition to his Alma Mater, to issue from the university press, at a very moderate subscription price. The embroidered mantle, however, but ill concealed the trifler. Sir Thomas had vigorously attacked the grammatical errors of the poet, which, in fact, was often a violation of the text, for Shakespeare wrote ungrammatically; the other editorial effort was a metrical amusement, gently lopping a redundant, or straightening a limping line; the only harm of his edition was his modesty in adopting all the innovations of his predecessors, for his own were quite innocent. On the whole, Sir Thomas appears to have edited his Shakespeare, wearing all the while his "white kid gloves," which the mad Tom Hervey, who ran away with his lady, by information which he ought not to have divulged, assured the world that the baronet always slept in.

Under the veil of giving "dear Mr. Pope's" edition, which no one craved, the great author of "The Divine Legation" now edited Shakespeare. It must have occurred to the readers of this edition, that hitherto no one had entered into any right conception of a great portion of the poet's writings. Many passages with which our memory is familiar were wrested into the most whimsical readings; plain matters were for ever obscured by perverse but ingenious interpretations; not only the words, but the thoughts of the author were changed; here a line was to be wholly rejected, and there an interpolation was to clear an imperfect sense; but the most prominent feature of the commentary was that learned fancy which struck out allusions to the most recondite circumstances of learned antiquity *.

In this great commentator on Shakespeare there was always a contest between his learning and his fancy; the one was copious, and the other was exuberant; neither could yield to the other; and the reader was sure to be led astray by both. His fervid curiosity was absolutely creative; all things crowded to bear on his point; in the precipitancy of his pen, his taste or his judgment was not of that degree which could save him even from inglorious absurdities. But the ingenious follies of his literature were such that they have often

* See "Quarrels of Authors."

been preserved, for the sake of all that learning which it required for their refutation.

When all was over, and the battle was fought and lost, the friends of the great man acknowledged that the editor's design had never been to explain Shakespeare! and that he was even conscious that he had frequently imputed to the poet meanings which had never entered the mind of the bard! Our critic's grand object was to display his own learning in these amusements of his leisure. Warburton wrote for Warburton, and not for Shakespeare; and the literary confession almost rivals those of Lauder or Psalmanazaar.

There is one more remarkable object in the Shakespeare of Warburton. He not only preserved that strange device of Pope to distinguish the most beautiful passages by *inverted commas*, but carried on that ridiculous process on his own separate account, by marking his favourites by *double commas*. It is evident that these great editors judged Shakespeare by these fragmentary and unconnected passages, which could not indicate the harmonious and gradual rise of the thoughts, nor the fine transitions of emotions, and less the comprehensive genius of the inventor. They were scattering the living members which must be viewed whole with all their movements, and at last must be sought for by the reader in his own mind. The truest

mode of discovering the beauties of an author is first to be conversant with the beautiful, otherwise it is possible that the beauties may escape the readers, even should they be marked by a Pope or a Warburton.

The acknowledged failure of the preceding editions invited to a fresh enterprise, and it was the edition of Johnson, in 1765, which conferred on Shakespeare the stability of a classic, by the vigour and discrimination of his criticism, and the solemnity of his judicial decisions.

When Johnson had issued his proposals twenty years before for an edition of Shakespeare, he pointed to a great novelty for the elucidation of the poet. His intuitive sagacity had discerned that a poet so racy and native required a familiarity both with the idiom and the manners of his age. He was sensible that a complete explanation of an author, not systematic and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual allusions and slight hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast. He enumerates, however, the desiderata for this purpose; among which we find that of reading the books which Shakespeare read, and to compare his works with those of writers who lived at the same time, or immediately preceded, or immediately followed him. This project, happily conceived, inferred comprehensive knowledge in the proposer; but it was

94507

only a reverie; a dim Pisgah view which the sagacity of the great critic had taken of that future Canaan, which he himself never entered. With this sort of knowledge, and these forgotten writers, which the future commentators of Shakespeare revelled in, Johnson remained wholly unacquainted.

But what proved more fatal to the editorial ability of JOHNSON than this imperfect knowledge of the literature and the manners of the age of Shakespeare, was that the commentator rarely sympathised with the poet, for his hard-witted and unpliant faculties, busied with the more palpable forms of human nature, when thrown amid the supernatural and the ideal seemed suddenly deserted of their powers; the magic knot was tied, which cast our Hercules into helpless impotence; and in the circle of imaginative creation, we discover the baffled sage resisting the spell, by apologising for Shakespeare's introduction of his mighty preternatural beings! a certain evidence that the critic had never existed for a moment under their influence. "Witches, fairies, and ghosts, would not now be tolerated by an audience;" such was the grave and fallacious assumption of the unimaginative critic, which seems something worse than Voltaire's raillery; for though that wit ridiculed the ghost in Hamlet, he afterwards had the poetic agility to transfer its solemnity to his own Semi-

ramis,—though, like all rapid inlayers, the appliqué did not fit to his work *.

We may even suspect the degree of our great critic's susceptibility of the infinitely-varied emotions flowing in the inexhaustible vein of the poet of nature. In those judicial summaries at the close of each drama, his cold approbation, his perplexing balancings, his hazarded doubts, or his positive censures, all alike betray the uncertainty and the difficulties of a critical mind, which misapplied its energies to themes adverse to its habits.

Johnson's preface to his Shakespeare was long held as a masterpiece; and several splendid passages, after more than half a century, remain to remind us of his nervous intellect. If we now read that preface with a different understanding than that of most of his contemporaries, it is because Johnson himself has revealed his poetical confessions in certain "Lives of the Poets."

* Laharpe, in a paroxysm of criticism, had both to defend and to censure his great master, Voltaire, on the subject of the Marvellous in Tragedy; and, strange to observe, in the coldness of the Aristotelian-Gallic Poetic, our "monster-poet" carries away the palm. The critic acknowledges that, though he is loath to compare "Semiramis" to that "monster of a tragedy"—"Hamlet," the Ghost there acts as a ghost should do, showing himself but to one person, and revealing a secret unknown to all but himself; while the Ghost of Ninus appears in a full assembly, only to tell the hero to listen to somebody else who knows the secret as well as the Ghost. —*Cours de Littérature.*

We now look on that famed preface much more as a labour of pomp than a labour of love. Far from me be any irreverence to our master-genius of the passed century, whose volumes were read by all readers, and imitated by all writers; my first devotion of literature was caught from his pages; and the fire still burns on that altar. But the literary character of JOHNSON, with his enduring works, is no longer a subject of inquiry, but of history; of truths established, and not of opinions which are mutable.

Can we imagine that Johnson himself experienced a degree of conviction, some perplexing consciousness, that his spirit was not endowed with the sensibility of Longinus? A profound thinker, acutely argumentative and analytical, though clothed in the purple of his cumbrous diction, and the cadences of his concatenated periods, when he touched on themes of pure imagination, and passions not merely declamatory, had nothing left to him but the solitary test of his judgment, to decide on what lies out of the scope of daily life. He interpreted the pathetic and the sublime, till they ceased to be either by the force of his reasoning and the weakness of his conceptions; he cross-examined shadowy fancies, till they vanished under the eye of the judge. He had no wing to ascend into "the heaven of invention."

In JOHNSON'S SHAKESPEARE, therefore, we may trace that deficient sympathy which subsequently betrayed itself in his revolting decisions on Collins, on Gray, on Milton, and on others. It was his hard fate to be called on to deliver his solemn decisions on two of our greatest poets; from Spenser he had fortunately escaped, having wholly forgotten the Muse of Mulla, while his piety and his taste had remembered Blackmore, in the collection of English poets. It is curious to detect the mode by which our great critic extricated himself from the difficulties of his judicial function on Shakespeare and on Milton, by his prudential sagacity, and his passive obedience to established authorities. Johnson's preface to Shakespeare was grafted on Pope's, as afterwards, when he came to Milton, he followed the track of Addison. But Johnson was too honest to disguise the reality of his own conviction; it was legitimate to adopt theirs, but it was independent to preserve his own; in this dissonance he has left a lesson and a warning for some who are eminent, and who travel in the high-road of criticism.

It is thus that we find in this famous preface to Shakespeare that he is hailed as the poet of nature, and is placed by the side of Homer; and of this Pope had instructed the critic; but in the sudden change the

noble qualities of the bard are minutely reversed; the antithesis was too often in the critic's own taste; and the characteristic excellence ascribed to Shakespeare seems hardly compatible with the number and the grossness of his faults. Every work of note bears the impression of its times; and we learn from the faithful chronicler of Johnson the real occasion which gave rise to this remarkable preface. "A blind and indiscriminate admiration of Shakespeare had exposed the British nation to the ridicule of foreigners; and this preface was considered as a grave, well-considered, and impartial opinion of the judge." Such was the defence of the logical critic, who so diligently enumerated the defects of his author, that Voltaire, who could never understand the language nor comprehend the genius of Shakespeare, might sometimes have referred to Johnson to confirm his own depreciating notions.

The extensive plan for the illustration of the poet, imperfectly projected by Johnson, was finally executed through a series of editions, which gave rise to a new class of literary antiquaries.

Shortly after the first edition of Johnson, Dr. FARMER led the way to the disclosure of a new lore in our old books. Farmer had silently pursued an untired chase in this "black" forest, for he had a keen *gusto* for the

native venison, and, alluding to his Shakespearian pursuits, exclaimed in the inspiring language of his poet—

> "Age cannot wither them, nor custom stale
> Their infinite variety."

His vivacity relieved the drowsiness of mere antiquarianism. This novel pursuit once opened, an eager and motley pack was hallooed up, and Shakespeare, like Actæon, was torn to pieces by a whole kennel of his own hounds, as they were typified, with equal humour and severity. But to be severe and never to be just is the penury of the most sordid criticism; and among these

> "Spirits black, white, and grey,"

are some of the most illustrious in English literature.

The original edition of Johnson consisted only of eight volumes; had not the contriving wisdom of the printers impressed the last into twenty and one huge tomes, they might easily have been expanded into forty.

When we survey the massive *variorum* edition of Shakespeare, we are struck by the circumstance that nothing similar has happened to any other national author. It was not to be expected that after the invention of the art of printing, an author could arise, whose works should be disfigured by treacherous transcribers,

corrupted by interpolations, and still more by a race of men whose art was unknown to the ancients, subjecting his text to the mercy of contending commentators and conjectural critics. But a singular combination of untoward circumstances attached to this poet and his works, produced this remarkable result. The scholiasts among the ancient classics had rejoiced in some rare emendation of the text, or the rhetorical commentator had flourished in the luxuriance of the latent beauties of some favourite author. But a far wider and deeper source of inquiry was now to be attempted, historical or explanatory—comments to clear up obscure allusions; to indicate unknown prototypes; to trace the vicissitudes of words as well as things; to picture forth the customs and the manners which had faded into desuetude; and to re-open for us the records of our social and domestic life, thus at once to throw us back into that age, and to familiarise us with that language, of Shakespeare which had vanished. Shakespeare, it may be said, suddenly became the favourite object of literary inquiry. Every literary man in the nation conned over and illumined "the infinite variety" of the bard. And assuredly they enriched our vernacular literature with a collection of historical, philological, and miscellaneous information, unparalleled among any other literary people. In 1785, Isaac Reed, in one of his

prefaces, informs us, that "the works of Shakespeare, during the last twenty years, have been the object of public attention."

All this novel knowledge was, however, not purchased at a slight cost. It was not only to be snatched up by accidental discovery, but it was more severely tasked by what Steevens called "a course of black-letter!"—dusty volumes, and fugitive tracts, and the wide range of antiquarian research. The sources whence they drew their waters were muddy; and STEEVENS, who affected more gaiety in his chains than his brothers in the Shakespearian galley, with bitter derision reproached his great coadjutor MALONE, whom he looked on with the evil eye of rivalry for drawing his knowledge from "books too mean to be formally quoted."

The commentators have encumbered the poet, who often has been but a secondary object of their lucubrations, for they not only write notes on Shakespeare, but notes, and bitter ones too, on one another. This commentary has been turned into a gymnasium for the public sports of friendly and of unfriendly wrestlers; where some have been so earnest, that it is evident that, in measuring a cast, they congratulated themselves in the language of Orlando, "If ever he goes alone again, I'll never wrestle for prize more."

THOMAS WARTON once covered with his shield some of the minor brotherhood: "If Shakespeare is worth reading he is worth explaining; and the researches used for so valuable and elegant a purpose merit the thanks of genius and candour, not the satire of prejudice and ignorance." But this serves not as an apology for abusing the privilege of a commentator; elucidating the poet into obscurity by information equally contradictory and curious; racking us by fantastic readings which no one imagined before or since; and laying us open to the mercy of some who never ventured to sharpen their pens but on our irresistible Shakespeare. What has been the result of the petty conflicts between the arch maliciousness of Steevens and the fervent plodding of Malone, which raised up two parties among the Shakespearian commentators, till they became so personal, that a Steevenite and a Malonist looked on each other suspiciously, and sometimes would drop the ordinary civilities of life? At length, strange to tell, after Steevens had laboured with zeal equal to the whole confraternity, it became a question with him, In what manner the poet COULD be read? Are we to con over each note appended to each word or passage? — but this would be perpetually to turn aside the flow of our imagination; or are we to read a large portion of the text uninterruptedly, and

then return to the notes?—but this would be breaking the unity of the poet into fragments; or, for a final decision, and the avowal must have mortified the ingenuous illustrator, according to a third class of readers, were these illustrations to be altogether rejected? must the poet or the commentator be at continual variance? or shall we endure to see "Alcides beaten by his page?"

Might I be allowed to offer an award on a matter so involved and delicate as this union between the genius of Shakespeare and the genius of his commentators, I would concede the divorce, from the incompatibility of temper between the parties; but I would insist on a separate maintenance, to preserve the great respectability attached to the party most complained of. The true reader of Shakespeare may then accommodate himself with two editions; the one for his hand, having nothing but what the poet has written; the other for the shelf, having all the commentators have conjectured, confuted, and confounded *.

* Much, if not all, that is valuable in this great body of varied information has been alphabetically arranged in "A Glossary, or Collection of Words, Phrases, Names, and Allusions to Customs, Proverbs, &c., which have required illustration in the *works of English Authors*, particularly *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*," by Archdeacon Nares, 4to, 1822: a compilation as amusing as it is useful, and which I suspect has not been justly appreciated. It is a substitute for all these commentators; and with this volume, at an easy rate, we are made free of the whole Shakespearian corporation.

The celebrity of Shakespeare is no longer bounded by his nationality. Even France responds, though the voice of Parisian critics is muffled, confused, and ambiguous; they have not yet solved the great problem, why Shakespeare is an omnipotent dramatist*. The school of Corneille and Racine are perplexed, like Quin, who could not be brought to acknowledge the creative acting of Garrick, observing that, "If that young man

* Monsieur VILLEMAIN, who possesses a perfect knowledge of our English writers on historical subjects, and many years since composed a life of Cromwell, has drawn up an elaborate article on SHAKESPEARE in the *Biographie Universelle*. The perplexities of his taste, and the contradictory results of his critical decisions, are amusing; but it must have been a serious labour for a person of his strict candour. Our critic remains astonished at Johnson's preference of Shakespeare's comic to his tragic genius, which never can be, he adds, the opinion of foreigners. Monsieur Villemain is perfectly right; for no foreigner can comprehend the humour, not always delicate but strong, which often depends on the phrase as well as on the character; but he errs when he can only discover in the comedy of Shakespeare merely a drama of intrigue, and not a picture of manners. Our critic has formed no conception of the poet's ideal standard and universal nature; insomuch that to this day we continue to apply among ourselves those exquisite personal strokes of the comic characters of Shakespeare. Our critic, who cannot perceive that which perhaps only a native can really taste, is indignant at the enthusiastic critic who has decided that MOLIERE only gave "a prosaic copy of human nature, and is merely a faithful or a servile imitator." I suppose this critic is Schlegel, a prejudiced critic on system. I beg leave to add, that it is not necessary to decry the French Shakespeare to elevate our own. Molière is as truly an original genius as any dramatist of any age.

were right, all which they had hitherto done was wrong."

Voltaire, in early life, to compose the Henriade, to escape from the Bastille, or to conceal his espionage, for he appears to have been a secret *employé* of the French ministry, resided a considerable time in England. He acquired an unusual knowledge of our language, and published an essay on the epic poets in English*. He discovered a new world among our writers, and was the first who introduced the Literature of England into France. Voltaire expounded to his nation the philosophy of Newton; but unhappily he criticised and translated Shakespeare, whose idiomatic phrases and metaphorical style did not admit of the demonstrations of the Newtonian system. To the

* This rare tract, which I once read in a private library which had been collected in the days of Pope, was apparently Voltaire's entire composition; for the Gallicisms bear the impression of a foreigner's pen, and of one determined to prove the authenticity of its source. "Voltaire, like the French in general," said Dr. Young, "showed the greatest complaisance outwardly, and had the greatest contempt for us inwardly." He consulted Dr. Young about his Essay in English, and begged him to correct any gross faults. The Doctor set himself very honestly to work, marked the passages most liable to censure, and when he went to explain himself about them, Voltaire could not avoid bursting out and laughing in his face!"—*Spence.*

Had Voltaire accepted the Doctor's verbal corrections, or the opinions suggested by him, something else than the "laughing in the face" had been recollected.

author of the Henriade, who had ever before his eyes the two great masters whom he was one day to rival, the anti-classical and "Gothic" genius of a poet of the Elizabethan period, scorning the unities, following events without he contrivance of an intrigue artfully developed, mingling farce with tragedy, buffoons with monarchs, and preternatural beings stalking amid the palpable realities of life,—such irregular dramas seemed to the Aristotelian, but "des farces monstrueuses," as we see they appeared to Rymer and Shaftesbury; but Voltaire was too sagacious to be wholly insensible that "these monstrous farces, which they call tragedies, had scenes grand and terrific." Voltaire, then meditating on his future dramas, in passing over the surface of the soil, discovered that a mine lay beneath—

"Some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,"

and the embedded treasure was worked with more diligence than with gratitude to the owner. If Voltaire ridiculed what he had found, it was partly with the desire of its concealment, but not wholly; for it was impossible for any foreigner to interpret sweet words, and idiomatic phrases, not to be found in dictionaries; or to make way through the bewilderment of the perpetual metaphorical diction of the daring fancy of the great poet; but the deformities of the bard would be too intelligible; all

those parts which Pope would have struck out as "superfœtations." A bald version, or a malicious turn, would amuse the world by those amazing absurdities, which the wit, too famous for his ridicule, rejoiced to commit, and Europe yet knew nothing of Shakespeare, and lay under the sway of this autocrat of Literature*.

---

* Two specimens of the criticism of Voltaire may explain his involuntary and his voluntary blunders:—

In "Hamlet," when one sentinel inquires of the other—"Have you had quiet guard?" he is answered—"Not a mouse stirring!" which Voltaire translates literally—"Pas un souris qui trotte!" How different is the same circumstance described by Racine—"Tout dort, et l'armée, et les vents, et Neptune!" A verse Kaimes had condemned as mere bombast! To every people who had not associated with the general night-stillness of a castle the movement of a mouse, this description would appear ludicrously puerile; while, with us, the familiar idiom is most happily appropriate to the speaker; but this natural language no foreigner can acquire by study or reflection; we imbibe our idioms as we did the milk of the nurse's breast.

In "Julius Cæsar," when Voltaire translates Cæsar's reply to Metellus, who would fall at his feet to supplicate for the repeal of his brother's banishment, the Cæsar of Shakespeare uses metaphorical expressions. He would not yield to

> "That which melteth fools; I mean sweet words,
> Low-crooked curt'sies, and base *spaniel-fawning.*
> If thou dost bend, and pray, and fawn for him,
> *I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.*"

This natural style was doubtless "trop familier" for the polished Frenchman, and his version is malicious, and he delights to detail every motion of a spaniel, even to the licking of the feet of his master!—

Mrs. MONTAGUE was the Minerva, for so she was complimented on this occasion, whose celestial spear was to transfix the audacious Gaul. Her "*Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare, compared with the Greek and French dramatic poets*," served for a popular answer to Voltaire. This accomplished lady, who had raised a literary coterie about her, which attracted such fashionable notice that its title has survived its institution, found in "the Blue-stocking Club" choral hymns and clouds of incense gathering about the altar in Portman Square! The volume is deemed "a wonderful performance," by those echoes of contemporary prepossessions, the compilers of dictionary-biography; even the poet Cowper placed Mrs. Montague "at the head of all that is called learned."

This lady's knowledge of the English drama, and the genius of our ancient Literature, is as vague and indistinct as that of the Greek tragedians, to whom she frequently refers, without, we are told, any intimacy with the originals. She discovers many bombast

---

"*Les airs d'un chien couchant* peuvent toucher un sot;
Flatte, prie à genoux, et *lèche-moi les pieds*—
Va, je te *rosserai* comme un chien."

Rosser can only be translated by so mean a phrase as "a sound beating;" while to spurn is no ignoble action, and is used rather in a poetical than familiar style.

speeches even in Macbeth, but she triumphantly exclaims, "Shakespeare redeems the nonsense, the indecorum, the irregularities of his plays;" irregularities which seem to her incomprehensible. Her criticisms are the random reflections of her feelings; but trusting to our feelings alone, unaccompanied by that knowledge on which they should be based, is confiding in a capricious, and often an erring dictator, governed by our own humours, or by fashionable tastes.

Thus have we viewed our bard through distinct eras, from the time in which he was not yet pre-eminently distinguished among his numerous peers; the Shakespeare of his own day could not be the Shakespeare of posterity; his rivals could only view that genius in its progress, and though there was not one who was a Shakespeare, yet, in that bursting competition of genius, there were many who were themselves Shakespearian. In a succeeding era, novel and unnational tastes prevailed; to the Drydenists who, dismissing the language of nature, substituted a false nature in their exaggerated passion, Shakespeare might have said of himself,—

> "I dare do all that may become a man,
> Who dares do more is none;"—

and when tried by the conventional code of criticism,

and condemned the poet of creation, might have exclaimed to Rymer and to Shaftesbury,—

> "The poet's eye,
> Bodying forth the forms of THINGS UNKNOWN,
> gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

Emerging into light through his modern editors, the volume in the hands of all men, the English public, with whom the classical model was held as nothing, received him as their national bard, for every one read in "the chance" that could only "hit suddenly," as Butler has described the genius of Shakespeare, revelations about himself. It seemed as if the poet had served in all professions, taking every colour of public and domestic life. Lawyers have detected their law-cunning in the legal contrivances of the poet; physicians have commented on the madness of Lear, and the mystery of Hamlet; statesmen have meditated on profound speculations in civil polity; the merchant and the mechanic, the soldier and the maiden, all, from the crowned head to the sailor-boy, found that in the cursory pages of the great dramatist, he had disclosed to all the tribes of mankind the secrets of their condition. The plenitude and the pliancy of the Shakespearian mind may be manifested by a trivial circumstance. We are a people of pamphleteers; a

free country has a free communication; and many, for interest or vain-glory, rush to catch the public ear. To point out the drift of their effusions, and aid a dubious title by an unquestioned authority, the greater number of these incessant fugitives, coming in all shapes, will be usually found to have recourse for this apposite thought, and crowning motto, to the prodigal pages of Shakespeare, who, thus pressed into their service, has often made the drift of the pamphleteer intelligible, vainly sought in his confused pamphlet.

When the strange condition of his works made the poet the noble prey of a brood of commentators, antiquarian and philological, from that generation he derived nothing of that abstract greatness with which we are now accustomed to contemplate a genius which seems universal. It was not by new readings, contested restorations, conjectural emendations, and notes explanatory of customs and phrases, however useful, that we could penetrate into the depths of a genius profound as nature herself, and it was only when philosophical critics tested this genius by their own principles, that the singularity was discovered to Europe.

Hitherto, the critical art had been verbal, or didactic, or dogmatic; but when the mind engaged itself in watching its own operations, by analysis and combination, and when the laws of its constitution formed a

science, educing principles, and exploring the sources of our emotions, all arbitrary conventions were only rated at their worth, while the final appeal was made to our own experience: these nobler critics founded the demonstrations of their metaphysical reasonings on our consciousness. This novel philosophy was more surely and more deeply laid in the nature of man, and whatever concerns man, than the arbitrary code of the Stagyrite, who had founded many of his laws on what had only been customs. We were passing from the history of the human understanding to the history of the imagination; and the whole beautiful process of the intellectual faculties was a new revelation. Theories of taste and systems of philosophy multiplied our sympathies, and amplified our associations; the intellectual powers had their history, and the passions were laid bare in their eloquent anatomy. But in these severe investigations, this new school had to seek for illustrations and for examples which might familiarise their abstract principles; and these philosophical critics appealed to nature, and drew them from her poetic interpreter.

It was the philosophical critics who, by trying Shakespeare by these highest tests, fixed him on his solitary eminence. From Lord Kaimes, through a brilliant succession of many a Longinus, the public has

been instructed. The strokes of nature and the bursts of passion, the exuberance of his humour and the pathos of his higher mood, untutored minds had felt more or less, and Shakespeare was lauded for what they considered to be his "natural parts;" and it was parts only on which they could decide, for the true magnitude they could not yet comprehend. The loneliness of his genius, in its profundity or its elevation, and the delicacy of its delineations, the mighty space his universal faculty extends before us, these they could never reach! The phenomenon had not been explained—the instruments had not yet been invented which could fathom its depths, or take the admeasurement at the meridian.

But if philosophical criticism has been so far favourable to develope the truth of nature in the great poet, it is not a consequence that Shakespeare himself produced his poetry on those revolving systems of metaphysics by which some late æsthetic and rhetorical German critics have somewhat offuscated the solitary luminary. They have developed such a system of intricate thinking in the genius of the poet, such a refined connexion between his conceptions and the execution of his dramatic personages—they have so grafted their own imagination upon his, that at times it becomes doubtful whether we are influenced by the

imagination of the critic, or that of the poet. In this seraphic mode of criticism, the poem becomes mythic, and the poet a myth; in the power of abstraction, these critics have passed beyond the regions of humanity. We soar with them into the immensity of space, and we tremble as if we stood alone in the universe; we have lost sight of nature, as we seem to have passed her human boundaries. The ancient divinity of poetry itself, even Homer, is absorbed in the Shakespearian myth; for Shakespeare, to snatch a feather from the fiery wing of Coleridge, is "the Spinosistic deity, an omnipresent creativeness."

Thou whose rapt spirit beheld the vision of human existence, "the wheel in the middle of the wheel, and the spirit of the living creature within," and wrotest thy inspirations, how shall we describe thy faculty? To paint lightning, and to give it no motion, is the doom of the baffled artist. Something, however, we may conceive of the Shakespearian faculty when we say that it consisted in a facility of feeling, an aptitude in following those trains of thought which constitute that undeviating propriety, in the consonance of the character with its action, and the passion with its language. Whether the poet followed the romancer or the chronicler in his conception of a dramatic character, he at the first step struck into that undeviating track

of our humanity amid the accidents of its position. The progress of each dramatic personage was therefore a unity of diction and character, of sentiment and action; all was direct, for there was no effort where all was impulse; and the dramatic genius of Shakespeare, as if wholly unstudied, seems to have formed the habit of his intellectual character. Was this unerring Shakespearian faculty an intuitive evidence, like certain axioms; or may we venture to fancy that our poet, as it were, had discovered the very mathematics of metaphysics?

Besides this facility of feeling appropriating to itself the whole sphere of human existence, there is another characteristic of our national bard. He struck out a diction which I conceive will be found in no other poet. What is usually termed diction would, applied to Shakespeare, be more definite, and its quality more happily explained, if we called it *expression*, and observed in what magic the Shakespearian expression lies. This diction has been subject to the censure of obscurity. Modern critics have ascribed the invention of our dramatic blank verse to Shakespeare; but Shakespeare was no inventor in the usual acceptation of the term, and assuredly was not of unrhymed metre: what, indeed, are imperfectly or rarely found among his tuneful predecessors and contemporaries, are the sweet-

ness of his versification, combined with ceaseless imagery; we view the image through the transparency of the thought never disturbing it; it is neither a formal simile nor an expanded metaphor—it is a single expression, a sensible image combined with an emotion.

THE "HUMOURS" OF JONSON.

JONSON studied "THE HUMOURS," and not the passions. What were these "humours?" The bard himself does not distinguish them from "manners—"

"Their MANNERS, now call'd HUMOURS, feed the stage."

The ambiguity of the term has confounded it with humour itself; they are however so far distinct, that a "humour," that is, some absorbing singularity in a character, may not necessarily be very humorous—it may be only absurd.

When this term of "humours" became popular, it sunk into a mystification. Every one suddenly had his "humour." It served on all occasions as an argument which closed all discussion. The impertinent insisted on the privilege of his "humour." "The idiot" who chose to be "apish," declared that a lock of hair fantastically hung, or the dancing feather in his cap, were his "humour." A moral quality, or an affection of the mind, was thus indiscriminately applied to things themselves, when they were objects of affectation or whim. The phrase was tossed about till it bore no certain meaning. Such indeed is the fate of all

fashionable cant—ephemera which, left to themselves, die away with their season.

The ludicrous incongruity of applying these physical qualities to moral acts, and apologising for their caprices by their "humours," was too exquisitely ludicrous not to be seized on as the property of our comic satirists. Shakespeare and Jonson have given perpetuity to this term of the vocabulary in vogue; and Jonson has dignified it by transferring it to his comic art. Shakespeare has personified these "humours" in that whimsical, blunt, grotesque Corporal Nym, the pith of whose reason and the chorus of whose tune are his "humours;" admirably contrasting with that other "humourist," his companion, ranting the fag-ends of tragedies "in Cambyses' vein." Jonson, more elaborate, according to his custom, could not quit his subject till he had developed the whole system in two comedies of "Every Man IN" and "Every Man OUT of his HUMOUR."

The vague term was least comprehended when most in use. Asper, the censor of the times*, desires Mitis, who had used it, "to answer what was meant;" Mitis, a neutralised man, "who never acts, and has therefore no character," can only reply "Answer what?" The term was too plain or too obscure for that simple soul to attach any idea to a word current with all the world.

* The Introduction to "Every Man Out of his Humour."

The philosopher then offers

> "To give these ignorant well-spoken days
> Some taste of their abuse of this word HUMOUR."

This rejoices his friend Cordatus;

> "Oh, do not let your purpose fall, good Asper;
> It cannot but arrive most acceptable,
> Chiefly to such as have the happiness
> Daily to see how *the poor innocent word*
> *Is rack'd and tortured.*"

It is then that Asper, or rather Jonson, plunges into a dissertation on "the elements," which, according to the ancient philosophy, compound the fragile body of man, with the four "humours," or moistures*.

Had not this strange phrase been something more than a modish coinage, it had not endured so long and spread so wide. Other temporary phrases of this nature were equally in vogue, nor have they escaped the vigilant causticity of Jonson. Such were "the vapours," and "the vapourers," and "the jeerers;" but these had not substance in them to live, and Jonson only cast on them a side-glance. "The humours" were derived from a more elevated source than the airy nothingness of fashionable cant.

How "the humours" came into vogue may I think be discovered. A work long famous, and of which

* See Nares's "Glossary" for an account of these Humours in their philosophical sense.

multiplied editions, in all the languages of Europe, were everywhere spread, deeply engaged public attention; this work was *Huarté's Examen de Ingenios*, translated into English as "The Examination of Men's Wits." It was long imagined that the Spaniard had drawn aside the veil from nature herself, revealing among her varieties those of the human character. The secret, "to what profession a man will be most apt," must have taken in a wide circle of inquirers. In the fifth chapter, we learn that "the differences of men's wits depend on the hot, the moist, and the dry;" the system is carried on through "the elements" and "the humours." The natural philosophy is of the schools, but the author's anatomy of the brain amounted to a demonstration of the phenomenon, as it seemed to him. He however had struck out some hardy novelties and some mendacious illustrations. The system was long prevalent, and every one now conceived himself to be the passive agent of his predominant temperament or "humour," and looked for that page which was to discover to him his own genius. This work in its day made as great a sensation as the "Esprit" of Helvetius at a later time; and in effect resembled the phrenology of our day, and was as ludicrously applied. The first English version—for there are several—appeared in 1594, and we find that, four years after, "the humours"

were so rife that they served to plot a whole comedy, as well as to furnish an abundance of what they called "epigrams," or short satires of the reigning mode.

Jonson's intense observation was microscopical when turned to the minute evolutions of society, while his diversified learning at all times bore him into a nobler sphere of comprehension. This taste for reality, and this fulness of knowledge on whatever theme he chose, had a reciprocal action, and the one could not go without the other. Our poet doggedly set to "a humour" through its slightest anomalies, and in the pride of his comic art expanded his prototype. Yet this was but half the labour which he loved; his mind was stored with the most burdensome knowledge; and to the scholar the various erudition which he had so diligently acquired threw a more permanent light over those transient scenes which the painter of manners had so carefully copied.

The pertinacity of Jonson in heaping such minute particularities of "a humour," has invariably turned his great dramatic personages into complete personifications of some single propensity or mode of action; and thus the individual is changed into an abstract being. The passion itself is wholly there, but this man of one volition is thrown out of the common brotherhood of man; an individual so artificially constructed as to include

a whole species. Our poet, if we may decide by the system which he pursued, seems to have considered his prodigious dramatic characters as the conduit-pipes to convey the abundant waters which he had gathered into his deep cisterns.

It is surely evident that such elaborate dramatic personages were not extemporary creations thrown off in the heat of the pen. Our poet professed to instruct as much as to delight; and it was in the severity of thought and the austerity of his genius that his nobler conceptions arose. His studious habits have been amply ascertained. When he singled out "a humour," to possess himself of every trait of the anomalous dispositions he contemplated, he must gradually have accumulated, as they occurred, the particulars whence to form the aggregate; and like Swift, in his "Advice to Servants," in his provident diligence he must have jotted down a mass such as we see so curiously unfolded in "the character of the persons," prefixed to "Every Man in his Humour," a singular dramatic sketch. To this mass, with due labour and shaping, he gave the baptism of an expressive name, and conceived that a name would necessarily become a person. If he worked in this manner, as I believe he did, and "the characters" we have just seen confirm the suggestion, it sufficiently explains the space he required to contain his mighty

and unmixed character—the several made into one; and which we so frequently observe he was always reluctant to quit, while a stroke in his jottings remained untold. His cup indeed often runs over, and sometimes the dregs hang on our lips. We have had perhaps too many of these jottings.

But if Jonson has been accused of having servilely given portraits—and we have just seen in what an extraordinary way they are portraits—his learning has also been alleged as something more objectionable in the dramatic art; and we have often heard something of the pedantry of Jonson.

In that elaborate personage Sir Epicure Mammon, we have not only the alchemist and the epicurean to answer that characterising name, but we are not to be set free without enduring the obscure babble of "the projection" and "the projectors"—which assuredly cost some patient sweat of that curious brain—and further being initiated into the gastronomic mysteries of the kitchens of the ancients. Volpone, and "the gentleman who loves not noise," his other masterpieces, like Sir Epicure Mammon, are of the same colossal character. In "The Fox" and "The Fly," the richest veins of antiquity are melted down into his own copious invention; nor had the ancients themselves a picture so perfect, or a scene so living, of those legacy-hunters, though that

vice was almost a profession with them. If true learning in the art of the drama be peccant, our poet is a very saintly sinner; and Jonson indeed was, as Cleaveland has hailed his manes,

"The wonder of a learned age."

The fate of Jonson has inflicted its penalties on his very excellences. Some modern critics, whose delicacy of taste in its natural feebleness could not strain itself to the vigour of Jonson, have strangely failed to penetrate into the depths of that mighty mind; and some modern poets have delivered their sad evidence, that for them the Coryphæus of our elder dramatists has become unintelligible. Of all our dramatists, Jonson, the Juvenal of our drama, alone professed to study the "humour" or manners of the age; but manners vanish with their generation; and ere the century closes even actors cannot be procured to personate characters of which they view no prototype. They remain as the triumphs of art and genius, for those who are studious of this rare combination; but they were the creatures of "the age," and not for "all time," as Jonson himself energetically and prophetically has said of Shakespeare *.

Shadwell, who has left us nearly twenty comedies, and "the god of whose idolatry" was Jonson, in his

* "He was not of an age, but for all time."—*Jonson.*

copious prefaces, and prologues and epilogues, overflows with his egotistical admiration of "the humours." In his preface to "The Sullen Lovers," he says that we are not to expect the intrigue of comedy, plot and business, lest he should "let fall the humour." And in "The Humourist," he says, "Mr. Jonson was very unjustly taxed for personating particular men," in the writing of his humours; "but it will ever be the fate of them that write the humours of the town." We have more of this in the dedication of "The Virtuoso," where we are told that "four of the humours are entirely new." We have his definition of these "humours" in the epilogue to "The Humourists," and which is neatly expressed.

> "A Humour is the bias of the mind,
> By which, with violence, 'tis one way inclined;
> It makes our action lean on one side still;
> And, in all changes, that way bends the will."

It is singular that as Jonson has been somewhat censured for drawing so elaborately these artificial men and their humours, Shadwell should have adopted the notion, and made it the staple of his comic invention.

When men were more insulated, and society was less monotonous than at the present day, those whom we now call humourists, without however any allusion to the system of the humours, and whom we now

rarely meet with, allowed their peculiar tastes and fancies to be more prominent in their habits, so as to make them more observable, and more the subject of ridicule than we find them in the present level decorum of society.

DRAYTON.

THE POLY-OLBION of DRAYTON is a stupendous work, "a strange Herculean toil," as the poet himself has said, and it was the elaborate production of many years. The patriotic bard fell a victim to its infelicitous but glorious conception; and posterity may discover a grandeur in this labour of love, which was unfelt by his contemporaries.

The POLY-OLBION is a chorographical description of England and Wales; an amalgamation of antiquarianism, of topography, and of history; materials not the most ductile for the creations of poetry. This poem is said to have the accuracy of a road-book; and the poet has contributed some notices, which add to the topographic stores of CAMDEN; for this has our poet extorted an alms of commendation from such a niggardly antiquary as Bishop Nicholson, who confesses that this work affords "a much truer account of this kingdom than could be well expected from the pen of a poet."

The grand theme of this poet was his fatherland! The muse of Drayton passes by every town and tower; each tells some tale of ancient glory, or of some "wor-

thy" who must never die. The local associations of legends and customs are animated by the personifications of mountains and rivers; and often, in some favourite scenery, he breaks forth with all the emotion of a true poet. The imaginative critic has described the excursions of our muse with responsive sympathy. "He has not," says Lamb, "left a rivulet so narrow that it may be stepped over without honourable mention, and has associated hills and streams with life and passion beyond the dreams of old mythology." But the journey is long, and the conveyance may be tedious; the reader, accustomed to the decasyllabic or heroic verse, soon finds himself breathless among the protracted and monotonous Alexandrines, unless he should relieve his ear from the incumbrance, by resting on the cæsura, and thus divide those extended lines by the alternate grace of a ballad-stanza. The artificial machinery of Drayton's personifications of mountains and rivers, though these may be often allowed the poet, yet they seem more particularly ludicrous, as they are crowded together on the maps prefixed to each county, where this arbitrary mythology, masculine and feminine, are to be seen standing by the heads of rivers, or at the entrances of towns.

This extraordinary poem remains without a parallel in the poetical annals of any people; and it may excite

our curiosity to learn its origin. The genealogy of poetry is often suspicious; but I think we may derive the birth of the POLY-OLBION from LELAND'S magnificent view of his designed work on "Britain," and that hint expanded by the "Britannia" of CAMDEN, who inherited the mighty industry, without the poetical spirit of LELAND: DRAYTON embraced both.

It is a nice question to decide how far history may be admitted into poetry; like "Addison's Campaign," the poem may end in a rhymed gazette. And in any other work of invention, a fiction, by too free an infusion of historical matter, can only produce that monster called "the Romance of History," a nonsensical contradiction in terms, for neither can be both; or that other seductive and dangerous association of real persons and fictitious incidents, the historical romance! It is remarkable that DRAYTON censures DANIEL, his brother poet, for being *too historical* in his "Civil Wars," and thus transgressing the boundaries of history and poetry, of truth and invention. Of these just boundaries, however, he himself had no clear notion. Drayton in his "Baron's Wars" sunk into a grave chronicler; and in the Poly-olbion, we see his muse treading a labyrinth of geography, of history, and of topography!

The author of the Poly-olbion may truly be considered as the inventor of a class of poems peculiar to our

country, and which, when I was young, were popular or fashionable. These are loco-descriptive poems. Such were Denham's Cooper's Hill *, and its numerous and, some, happy imitations. In these local descriptions some favoured spot in the landscape opens to the poet not only the charm of its natural appearance, but in the prospect lie scenes of the past. Imagination, like a telescope fixed on the spot, brings nearer to his eyes those associations which combine emotion with description; and the contracted spot, whence the bard scattered the hues of his fancy, is aggrandised by noble truths.

The first edition of the Poly-olbion, in 1613, consisted of eighteen "Songs," or cantos, and every one enriched by the notes and illustrations of the poet's friend, our great national antiquary, SELDEN, whose avarice of words in these recondite stores conceals almost as many facts as he affords phrases. This volume was ill received by the incurious readers of that age. Drayton had vainly imagined that the nobles and gen-

* Dr. Johnson has ascribed the invention of local poetry to Denham, who, he thought, had "traced a new scheme of poetry, copied by Garth and Pope, after whose names little will be gained by an enumeration of smaller poets." Johnson and the critics of his day were wholly unacquainted with the Fathers of our poetry; nor is it true that we have not had loco-descriptive poems since Garth and Pope, which may rank with theirs.

tlemen of England would have felt a filial interest in the tale of their fathers, commemorated in these poetic annals, and an honourable pride in their domains here so graphically pictured. But no voice, save those of a few melodious brothers, cheered the lonely lyrist, who had sung on every mountain, and whose verse had flowed with every river. After a hopeless suspension of nine years, the querulous author sent forth the concluding volume to join its neglected brother. It appeared with a second edition of the first part, which is nothing more than the unsold copies of the first, to which the twelve additional "Songs" are attached, separately paged. These last come no longer enriched by the notes of Selden, or even embellished by those fanciful maps which the unfortunate poet now found too costly an ornament. Certain accidental marks of the printer betray the bibliographical secret, that the second edition was in reality but the first *. The preface to the

* Perhaps none of our poets have been more luckless in their editors than Drayton. He himself published a folio edition of his works in 1619; but some of his more interesting productions, now lying before me, are contained in a small volume, 1631—the year in which he died.

A modern folio edition was published by Dodsley in 1748. The title-page assures us that this volume contains *all* his writings; while a later edition, in four volumes 8vo, 1753, pretends to supply the deficiencies of the former, which at length Dodsley had discovered, but it is awkwardly done by an *Appendix*, and is still deficient. The rapid

second part is remarkable for its inscription, in no good humour,

"To any that will read it!"

There was yet no literary public to appeal to, to save the neglected work which the great Selden had deemed worthy of his studies; but there was, as the poet indignantly designates them, "a cattle, *odi profanum vulgus et arceo*, of which I account them, be they never so great." And "the cattle" conceived that there was nothing in this island worthy studying. We had not yet learned to esteem ourselves at a time when six editions of Camden's Britannia, in the original Latin, were diffusing the greatness of England throughout Europe.

But though this poet devoted much of his life to this great antiquarian and topographic poem, he has essayed

demand for a new edition of Drayton between 1748 and 1753 bears a suspicious aspect. An intelligent bibliopolist, Mr. Rodd, informs me that this *octavo* edition is in fact the identical *folio*, only arranged to the octavo form by a contrivance, well known among printers, at the time of printing the folio. The separation of the additional poems in the Appendix confirms this suggestion.

Of the "*Poly-olbion*," the edition called the second, of 1622, has fetched an excessive price; while the first, considered incomplete, may be procured at a very moderate price. The possessor of the first edition, however, enjoys the whole treasure of Selden's lore. Mr. Southey, in his "Specimens of Our Ancient Poets," has reprinted the entire "Polyolbion" with his usual judgment; but, unhappily, the rich stores of Selden the publishers probably deemed superfluous. Drayton is worthy of a complete edition of his works.

his powers in almost every species of poetry; fertility of subject, and fluency of execution, are his characteristics. He has written historical narratives too historical; heroic epistles hardly Ovidian; elegies on several occasions, or rather, domestic epistles, of a Horatian cast; pastorals, in which there is a freshness of imagery, breathing with the life of nature; and songs, and satire, and comedy. In comedy he had not been unsuccessful, but in satire he was considered more indignant than caustic. There is one species of poetry, rare among us, in which he has been eminently successful; his "Nymphidia, or Court of Faerie," is a model of the grotesque, those arabesques of poetry, those lusory effusions on chimerical objects. There are grave critics who would deny the poet the liberty allowed to the painter. The "Nymphidia" seems to have been ill understood by some modern critics. The poet has been censured for "neither imparting nor feeling that half-believing seriousness which enchants us in the wild and magical touches of Shakespeare;" but the poet designed an exquisitely ludicrous fiction. Drayton, has, however, relieved the grotesque scenes, by rising into the higher strains of poetry, such as Gray might not have disdained.

It was the misfortune of Drayton not to have been a popular poet, which we may infer from his altercations with his booksellers, and from their frequent prac-

tice of prefixing new title pages, with fresher dates, to the first editions of his poems. That he was also in perpetual quarrel with his muse, appears by his frequent alteration of his poems. He often felt that curse of an infelicitous poet, that his diligence was more active than his creative power. Drayton was a poet of volume, but his genius was peculiar; from an unhappy facility in composition, in reaching excellence he too often declined into mediocrity. A modern reader may be struck by the purity and strength of his diction; his strong descriptive manner lays hold of the fancy; but he is always a poet of reason, and never of passion. He cannot be considered as a poet of mediocrity, who has written so much above that level; nor a poet who can rank among the highest class, who has often flattened his spirit by its redundance.

There was another cause, besides his quarrel with his muse, which threw a shade over the life of Drayton. He had been forward to greet James the First, on his accession to the throne of England, with a congratulatory ode; but for some cause, which has not been revealed, he tells us, "he suffered shipwreck by his forward pen." The king appears to have conceived a personal dislike to the bard, a circumstance not usual with James towards either poets or flatterers. It seems to arise from some state-matter, for Drayton tells us,

"I feare, as I do stabbing, this word, state."

According to Oldys, Drayton appears to have been an agent in the Scottish king's intercourse with his English friends; some unlucky incident probably occurred, which might have indisposed the monarch towards his humble friend. The unhappy result of his court to the new sovereign cast a sour and melancholy humour over his whole life; Drayton, in his "Elegy" to his brother-poet, Sandys, has perpetuated his story.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY OF RAWLEIGH.

RAWLEIGH is a great name in our history, and fills a space in our imagination. His military and maritime genius looked for new regions, to found perhaps his own dominion. Yet was this hero the courtier holding "the glass of fashion," and the profound statesman—whose maxims and whose counsels Milton, the severe Milton, carefully collected—and the poet, who, when he found a master-genius lingering in a desert, joyed to pay him the homage of his protection. Rawleigh, who in his youthful hours, and even through his vagrant voyages, was at all times a student, in the ripeness of his knowledge was a sage. Thus he who seemed through all his restless days to have lived only for his own age, was the true servant of posterity.

If ever there have been men whose temperaments and dispositions have harmonised within themselves faculties seemingly incompatible, with an equability of force combining the extremes of our nature, it would not be difficult to believe that Sir Walter Rawleigh was one of this rarest species. Various and opposite were his enterprises, but whichever was the object his aptitude was prompt; for he is equally renowned for his active

and his contemplative powers; in neither he seems to have held a secondary rank. And he has left the nation a collection of his writings which claim for their author the just honours of being one of the founders of our literature.

This is the perspective view of his *character* as it appears at a distance; his was a strange and adventurous *life!* the shifting scenes seem gathering together as in a tale of fiction, full of as surprising incidents, and as high passions, and as intricate and mysterious as the involutions of a well-invented fable. And in this various history of a single individual, should we be dazzled by the haughtiness of prosperity, and even be startled by the baseness of humiliation, still shall we find one sublime episode more glorious than the tale, and as pathetic a close as ever formed the catastrophe of a tragic romance. I pursue this history as far as concerns its psychological development.

It was the destiny of Rawleigh to be the artificer of his own fortunes, and in that arduous course to pass through pinching ways and sharp turns. The younger son of a family whose patrimony had not lasted with their antiquity, he had nothing left but his enterprise and his sword; his mind had decided on his calling. The romantic adventures of the Spaniards in new regions had early kindled the master-mind which

takes its lasting bent from its first strong impulse. The Spaniards and their new world, "the treasures and the paradises" which they enjoyed, haunted his dreams to his latest days. The age in which the great struggle had commenced in Europe for the independence of nations and of faiths, was as favourable to the indulgence of the military passion as it was pregnant with political instruction. No period in modern history was so prodigal of statesmen and of heroes; and Rawleigh was to be both.

Two noble schools for military education were opened for our youthful volunteer: among the Protestants in France, when they assembled their own armies, and subsequently in the Netherlands, under the Prince of Orange, Rawleigh learned the discipline of a valorous but a wary leader, and beheld in Don John of Austria the hardihood of a presumptuous commander whose "self-confidence could overcome the greatest difficulties, yet in his judgment so weak, that he could not manage the least."

The captain who had fleshed his sword in many a field, now cast his fortunes in that other element which led Columbus to discovery, and Pizarro to conquest. Rawleigh had a uterine brother, whom he justly called his "true brother," Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a great navigator, and the projector of a new passage to

the Indies; an expedition was fitted out by them to colonise some parts of North America; his first maritime essay was frustrated by a disastrous accident. But the intrepid activity of Rawleigh allowed no pause, and now it turned against the rebellious kerns of Ireland. His disputes with Grey, the lord-deputy, brought them before the council-board in the presence of the Queen. Our adventurer knew to value this fortunate opportunity. His eloquent tale struck his lordly adversary dumb, and was not slightly noticed by Elizabeth. The soldier of fortune was now hanging loosely about the circle of the court, watchful of another fortunate moment to attract the Queen's attention. There was a very remarkable disposition in this extraordinary man, as I have elsewhere noticed, of practising petty artifices in the affairs of life. The gay cavalier flung his rich embroidered mantle across the plashy spot for an instantaneous foot-cloth, not unknowing that an act of gallantry was sure to win the susceptible coquetry of his royal mistress. His personal grace, and his tall stature, and the charm of his voluble elocution when once admitted into the presence, were irresistible. On the same system as he had cast his mantle before the queen, he scratched on a window-pane likely to catch her majesty's eye that verse expressive of his "desire"

and "his fear to climb," to which the Queen condescended to add her rhyme.

The man of genius was not yet entangled in the meshes of political parties, and was still contemplating on an imaginary land north of the Gulf of Florida, as studious of the art of navigation as he had been of the art of war. He has left a number of essays on both these subjects, composed for Prince Henry in the succeeding reign. He was already in favour with the Queen, for she sanctioned a renewal of the unfortunate expedition under his brother. Rawleigh had the largest vessel built under his own eye, for he was skilful in naval architecture, and he named it "The Rawleigh," anticipating the day when it should leave that name to a city or a kingdom. It was on this occasion that the Queen commanded Rawleigh to present to his brother Sir Humphrey Gilbert a precious gem on which was engraven an anchor guided by a lady, graciously desiring in return the picture of the hardy adventurer. Such were the arts of female coquetry which entered so admirably into her system of policy, kindling such personal enthusiasm in the professed lovers of their royal mistress, while she resigned her heroes to their enterprises at their own honourable cost of their fortunes or their lives. In this second expedition Sir Humphrey

Gilbert realised a discovery of what was then called "The Newfoundland," of which he took possession for England with the due formalities; but on his return his slender bark foundered, and thus obscurely perished one of the most enlightened of that heroic race of our maritime discoverers,—the true fathers of future colonies.

Rawleigh, unrolling an old map which had been presented to her royal father, charmed the Queen by the visions which had long charmed himself. Her majesty granted letters patent to secure to him the property of the countries which he might discover or might conquer. Rawleigh minutely planned the future operations, and by the captains he sent, for the Queen would not part with her favourite, that country was discovered to which had the royal maiden not so eagerly given the name of "Virginia," had probably borne that of Rawleigh; for subsequently he betrayed this latent design when he proposed founding a city with that romantic name.

But the pressing interests of our home affairs withdrew his mind from undiscovered dominions. Rawleigh was a chief adviser of Elizabeth in the great Spanish invasion. He was eminently active in various expeditions, and not less serviceable in Parliament. The ceaseless topic of his counsels, and the frequent exercise of his pen, was the alarming aggrandisement

of the Spanish power. At this day, perhaps, we can form no adequate notion of that catholic and colossal dominion which Rawleigh dwells on. "No prince in the West hath spread his wing far over his nest but the Spaniard, and made many attempts to make themselves masters of all Europe." Possibly he may have ascribed too great an influence to the treasures of India, which seem to have been always exaggerated; however, he assures us, and as a statesman he may have felt a conviction, that "its Indian gold endangers and disturbs all the nations of Europe; it creeps into counsels, purchases intelligence, and sets bound loyalty at liberty in the greatest monarchies. When they dare not with their own forces invade, they basely entertain the traitors and vagabonds of all nations." We have here a complete picture of those arts of policy which, in the revolutionary system of France, endangered Europe, and which may yet, should ever a colossal power again overshadow its independent empires.

To clip "the wing that had spread far over its nest," by cutting off the uninterrupted supplies of the plate fleets of Spain, was a course in which the Queen only perceived the earnest loyalty of the intrepid adventurer; nor was that loyalty less for its perfect accordance with his own personal concerns.

Rawleigh and his joint adventurers in these dis-

coveries were carrying on their expeditions at the risk of their private fortunes, and it appears that his own zeal had beguiled young men to change their immoveable lands for light pinnaces. The prudential ministers looked on with a cold eye, and the economical sovereign, as she was wont, rewarded her hero in her own way. Elizabeth bestowed titular honours, and cut out a seignory in Ireland from the Earl of Desmond's domains, which Rawleigh's own sword had chiefly won; twelve thousand acres, yielding no rents; dismantled farms and tenantless hamlets—an estate of fire and blood! A more substantial patent was conferred on him, to license taverns for the sale of wines; and at length it was enlarged to levy tonnage and poundage, specifying that the grant was "to sustain his great charges in the discovery of remote countries."

This was one of those odious monopolies by which the parsimonious sovereign pretended to reward the services of the individual by the infliction of a great public grievance, infinitely more intolerable than any pension-list, for every monopoly was a traffic admitting all sorts of abuses. Rawleigh's inventive faculty often broke forth into humbler schemes in domestic affairs. He seems first to have perceived in the expansion of society, the difficulty of communication for the wants of life. He projected an office for uni-

versal agency; and in this he anticipated that useful intelligence which we now recognise by the term of advertisement. New enterprises and ceaseless occupation were the aliment of that restless and noble spirit. But these monopolies, severely exacted, provoking complaints and contests, were one among other causes which may account for Rawleigh's unpopularity, even at his meridian.

To his absorbing devotion to obtain the Queen's favour, he has himself ascribed his numerous enemies. While Elizabeth listened to his ingenious solutions of all her inquiries, many close at hand took umbrage lest they themselves were being supplanted; while he himself, with marked expressions, disdained all popularity. Hence, from opposite quarters, we learn how haughtily his genius bore him in commanding the world under him. And there is no doubt, as Aubrey tells us, that he was "damnably proud." Even in the height of court favour, this great man was obnoxious to the people. This we see by an anecdote of Tarleton, the jester of Elizabeth, famed for his extemporal acting. Performing before the Queen, while Rawleigh stood by her majesty, shuffling a pack of cards, and pointing to the royal box, the jesting comedian exclaimed, "See, the knave commands the queen!" Her majesty frowned; but the audience applauding, the

Queen, ever chary in checking any popular feeling, reserved her anger till the following day, when Tarleton was banished from the royal presence. Nor was Rawleigh less unpopular in the succeeding reign, when the mob hooted this great man, and when this great man condescended to tell them how much he despised such rogues and varlets! The inconsiderate multitude, in the noble preface to his great work, he compared to "dogs, who always bark at those they know not, and whose nature is to accompany one another in these clamours."

However busied by the discovery of remote countries, the armed ships of Rawleigh often brought into port a Spanish prize. The day arrived—the short but golden day—when, as his contemporary and a secretary of state has told us, "he who was first to roll through want, and disability to exist, before he came to a repose," betrayed a sudden affluence—in the magnificence about him—in the train of his followers, when he seemed to be the rival of the chivalrous Essex—in the gorgeousness of his dress, from the huge diamond which buttoned his feather, to his shoes powdered with pearls, darting from every point of his person the changeful light of countless jewels. In this habiliment, fitted to be the herald of that goddess of beauty to which Elizabeth was familiarly compared, beside the Queen

during her royal progresses, stood the captain of her guard, and her eyes were often solaced as they dwelt on the minion of fortune, her own prosperous adventurer; it was with secret satisfaction that she knew his treasure was not taken out of her exchequer. It could only have been some great Spanish galleon, like that of "The Madre de Dios," which furnished Rawleigh with that complete suit of armour of solid silver which fixed all eyes at the tilt; or which went to build the stately mansion of Sherborne, and to plan its fanciful gardens and groves, drawing the river through the rocks. Curious in horticulture as in the slightest arts he practised, Rawleigh's hands transplanted the first orange trees which breathed in this colder clime, as he had given Ireland the Virginian potato, and England the Virginian tobacco, and, perhaps, the delicious ananas. But Sherborne was Church land. It is said that Sir Walter had often cast a wistful eye on it as it lay in his journeys from Devonshire. It gave umbrage to some in Church and State that, by frightening a timid bishop of Salisbury, he had prevailed on him to alienate the manor of Sherborne from his see in favour of the Crown, that it might the more securely be transferred to him who had coveted it, till another coveter, in the despicable Carr, plundered him who had despoiled the diocese.

A genius versatile as ambitious, moving in the eventful court of a female sovereign, though often musing on "remote countries" or Spanish galleons, could not stand as a mere spectator amid the agitated amphitheatre of politics, nor in the luxuriance of courtly idleness save himself from softer, but not always less fatal, intrigues. Rawleigh was the victim of love and of politics.

On his first entrance to a court life, Rawleigh found Burleigh and Leicester watchful of each other. They were the heads of dark factions which clouded the Court of Elizabeth, and crooked were the ways our aspirant had to wind. Leicester seems to have been an early patron of Rawleigh, by means of his nephew Sir Philip Sidney. At length, perceiving his ascendancy over the Queen, the great lord, to overturn this idol of womanish caprice, introduced his youthful son-in-law, the famous and unfortunate Essex; nor had he, who himself had been a reigning favourite, miscalculated on the fascination of a new lover. The contest for the royal smile became too apparent; ruptures and reconciliations followed, till death closed these eventful jealousies. Rawleigh had glided over to the opposition under the subtle and the plotting Cecil.

An intrigue of less guiltiness than these dark machinations of heartless men banished Rawleigh from

court. In the dalliance of the ladies of the privy-chamber, through the long tedious days of audience, he once too wittily threw out an observation on that seductive but spotless circle, the maids of honour; who, he declared, were "like witches, who could do hurt, but do no good." There was one, however, the bewitching Throgmorton, who was all goodness; the impassioned knight was resistless; and subsequently the law consecrated what love had already irrevocably joined. But envy with its evil eye was peering. The Queen of Virgins, implacable in love-treasons, sent the lovers to the Tower.

In this desperate predicament, Rawleigh had lost in an hour the proud work of his highest ambition, the favour of his mistress-sovereign. The forlorn hero had recourse to one of those prompt and petty stratagems in which he was often so dexterous. At his prison-window, one day, he beheld the Queen passing in her barge, and suddenly raved like a distracted lover. He entreated to be allowed to go in disguise to rest his eyes once more on the idol of his heart; and when the governor refused this extraordinary request of a state-prisoner, he, in his agony, struggled. Their daggers were clutched; till Sir Arthur Gorge, seeing "the cold iron walking about," rushed between these terrible combatants. All this, Gorge, then a friend of Raw-

leigh, minutely narrates in a letter to Cecil, at the same time gently hinting that, if the minister deem it proper, it may be communicated to the Queen, that such was the miserable condition of Rawleigh, that he fell distracted only at the distant sight of her majesty. This theatrical scene was got up for the nonce, and served as a prologue to another characteristic effusion, a letter of raving gallantry, which Orlando Furioso himself might have penned, potent with the condensed essence of old romance. The amorist in his prison thus sorrows: "I was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus; the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks like a nymph; sometime sitting in the shade like a goddess, sometime singing like an angel." Sir Walter knew how high the pulse beat of his royal mistress, now aged by her sixtieth year. He obtained his freedom, but was banished the presence. And now, cast out of court favour, and calling himself "The Queen's Captive," Rawleigh, whom many had feared and few had not admired, found that even fools had the courage to vex a banished favourite.

There was no hope; yet Rawleigh, in his exile at his own Sherborne, addressed more than one letter to the Queen, warning her of "the dangers of a Spanish faction in Scotland." But the letters were received in

silence. Rawleigh then attempted to awaken Cecil to the state of Ireland, then on the point of exploding into a rebellion. He compares himself to the Trojan soothsayer, who cast his spear against the wooden horse, and was not believed." The language of complaint was not long tolerable to a spirit which would have commanded the world; and at once he took his flight from the old to the new, and his fleet and himself were again buoyant on the ocean.

This was Rawleigh's first voyage to "the empire of Guiana," as it was then called. His interesting narrative Hume has harshly condemned, as containing "the most palpable lies ever imposed on the credulity of mankind." Our romantic adventurer has incurred censure for his own credulity in search of mines which appear to have existed, and of "the golden city," which lying Spaniards had described; and he had even his honour impeached by the baffled speculators of his own day, whom he had beguiled with his dreams; but he who sacrificed life and fortune in a great enterprise, left the world a pledge that he at least believed in his own tale.

Rawleigh, like other men of genius, was influenced by the spirit of the age, which was the spirit of discovery; and to the brave and the resolved, what could be impracticable which opened a new world? The tradi-

tions of the Spaniards had been solemnly recorded in the collections of their voyages, and had been sanctioned by the reports of Rawleigh's own people: and he himself had fed his eyes and his dreams on the novel aspect of those fertile plains and branching rivers, inhabited by fifty nations; on animals of a new form, and birds of a new plumage; and on a vegetable world of trees and plants, and flowers, and fruits, on which the eye dwelt for the first time—a fresh creation, "the face of whose earth hath not been torn, nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance."

The origin of those puerile tales which the Europeans brought home with them has not been traced. Some have the air of religious legends, descriptive of the Paradise of the Blacks, such as that chimerical Manoa, where they said, "the king had golden images of every object on earth." Or were such marvellous fictions the shrewd inventions of these children of nature, more cunning than the men of Europe, stupified and credulous from their sovereign passion? When the Indians on the coast found that the whites seemed insatiate of gold and pearls, they fostered the madness, directing their strange invaders far up into the land, to the great city of Manoa, the El-Dorado of the Spaniards, and which no one ever reached. In this manner they probably designed to rid themselves of their ambiguous guests,

sending them to stray in the deserts of primeval forests, or to sail along interminable rivers, wrecked amid rapid falls.

Rawleigh endured many miseries; and on his return his narrative was deemed fabulous. The pathos of his language, however, perpetuates his dignified affliction. "Of the little remaining fortune I had, I have wasted in effect all herein; I have undergone many constructions, been accompanied with many sorrows, with labour, hunger, heat, sickness, and peril. From myself I have deserved no thanks, for I am returned a beggar and withered."

An enterprise which was, as he himself considered it to be, national, crushed the resources of the individual. He assures us that he might have enriched himself, had "it become the former fortune in which he once lived, and sorted with all the offices of honour, which by her majesty's grace he held that day in England, for him *to go journies of picory;*" that is, in Gondomar's plain Spanish, "piracy;" for the Spaniards applied the term *picarro*, a rogue or thief, to every one sailing in their forbidden seas. The dedication of his narrative, though directed to Howard and Cecil, was evidently addressed to "the lady of ladies," who, however, could not break her enchanted silence.

Spain trembled at the efforts of a single hero of Eng-

land; she seemed to anticipate her uncertain dominion over that new world. Spain, though proud and mighty, standing on her golden feet, yet found them weak as unbaked clay, while her treasure-fleets were either burned or sunk, or carried into our ports. But at home there were who dreaded the ascendancy of that bold spirit, which even in his present sad condition asserted that "there were men worthy to be kings of these dominions, and who, by the Queen's grace and leave, would undertake it of themselves." His adversaries would cloak their private envy under the fair colour of the public safety, or seemed wise with prudential scepticism. Yet the dauntless soul of Rawleigh, amid his distresses, despatched two ships under his devoted Keymis, to keep up the intercourse with the weak colony he had left behind; this was the second voyage to Guiana, which only increased the anxiety for a third, which soon followed.

It is a curious instance of that alarm of jealousy prevalent with the favourites of those days, that during the time of Rawleigh's disgrace at court, merely his sudden appearance in the metropolis, as the news is cautiously indicated, "gave cause of discontent to some other"—that is, the reigning favourite, Essex; possibly there might be some cause, for the writer tells, that Rawleigh was "in good hope to return into

grace*;" but this restorative was not then administered to the lorn stroller from Sherborne. The Queen was imperturbable.

The royal anger of Elizabeth never interfered with her policy, nor dulled her sagacity. Two years after, in 1596, it was decided to attack the Spanish fleet in their own harbours, according to a plan laid down by Rawleigh, as far back as in 1588; he was now wanted, and therefore he was remembered, as far as his appointment, to be one of the four commanders in the famous expedition against Cadiz. Essex, as commander-in-chief, betrayed his incompetence, and Rawleigh the prompt energy of his military and his maritime abilities. Essex, at all times his rival, and never his friend, saw his own lustre dusked by the eminence of his inferior; and on his return fatally read in the eyes of his royal mistress the first omen of his decline. During his absence, his recommendation of Sir Thomas Bodley for the secretaryship of state had been rejected, and the hated Cecil had triumphed. Rawleigh now undertook a more difficult affair than the victory of Cadiz—he effected an amicable arrangement between Cecil and Essex; and this seems to have been a most grateful service to the Queen, for, a month afterwards, we find him again at court. Five years must have elapsed,—

* Lodge's Illustrations of British History, iii. 67.

so long the Queen could preserve the royalty of her anger.

Restored to the Queen's favour, the lover had lost nothing of his fascination. The very day on which Cecil led Rawleigh in "as captain of the guard," he rode in the evening with the Queen, and held a private conference; where, probably, many secrets and counsels were divulged, too long and too proudly suppressed *. All this was done in the absence of Essex, but not without his consent; for the three enemies were now to be friends.

The second great expedition followed. Again Essex betrayed his inexperience and his failure, while Rawleigh, in a brilliant action, took Fayal. The reception of Essex at court levelled his ambition, and he retreated from the Queen's reproaches, sick at heart, to bury himself in sullen seclusion. The remainder of his days exhibit a series of disturbed acts, in the continued conflict between his own popularity and the variable favour of the Queen. To complete this tale of political intrigues, we have a letter, remarkable for its style, its matter, and its object, from Rawleigh to Cecil, urging the annihilation of "the tyrant," before "it is too late," in terms hardly ambiguous enough to save Rawleigh from the charge of having hurried on the fate of Essex,

* Sidney Letters, ii. 45.

at whose execution he shed tears *; and in the confession of one of Essex's desperate advisers, in their mad rising, we learn that the Earl had fixed on Rawleigh to be got rid of.

If we reflect a moment on this triumvirate of political friends—and Cecil secretly assured the Scottish monarch, that "he and they would never live under one apple-tree"—we may see how the wiles and jealousies of love are not more fatal than those of intriguing statesmen. Rawleigh, for a purpose, reconciles Essex with Cecil; but in reality, the three alike bear a mutual antipathy. When Essex in disgrace lay sick at home, and the Queen, half-repentant in her severity, sent a friendly message to the Earl, this appearance of returning favour towards Essex startled Rawleigh, who is

* When Rawleigh was himself in the place where he had put Essex—on the scaffold, he solemnly declared that "he had no hand in his blood, and was none of them that procured his death." How are we to reconcile this declaration with the extraordinary letter which first appeared in Murdin's Collection, and which Hume asserts "contains the strongest proofs to the contrary?"—Mr. Lodge understands the advice of Rawleigh in the very worst sense; Mr. Tytler, with ingenuity, suggests that Cecil, with "a prospective wariness, which—not satisfied with deceiving his contemporaries—provided *blinds for posterity*," procured Rawleigh to address this letter to him; and, in a word, that, in composing this energetic epistle, he was not so much the writer as the agent in the plot. I am more disposed to believe that when Rawleigh wrote so remarkable a letter, he was fully aware of its import, and looked forwards to the result.

seized with sickness in his turn; and the Queen, at once the royal slave and mistress of her court-lovers, is compelled to send him a cordial of an equivalent kindness; and both these political patients were cured by the same prescription.

Cecil and Rawleigh paused not till they laid the head of Essex on the block; and that day sealed their own fortunes, for, left without a rival, they became rivals to each other. "Those," said Rawleigh on the scaffold, "who set me against him, set themselves afterwards against me, and were my greatest enemies." This may be placed among the confessions of criminal friendships!

Cecil "bore no love to Rawleigh," tells a contemporary; but we know more than contemporaries, and we possess secrets which Rawleigh could not discover while Elizabeth was on the throne, though a lurking suspicion of the hollowness of his friend "Robin" may have lain on his mind when he wrote this verse on the ambidextrous Talleyrand, who through all changes

"Still kept on the mountain, and left us on the plain."

It was while this subdolous minister was holding most intimate intercourse with Rawleigh, while his son was placed under his guardian care at Sherborne, and he himself, with Lord Cobham his brother-

in-law, there was a guest, that this extraordinary Machiavel was daily working at the destruction of both his friends! This was effectually done by instilling into the Scottish monarch antipathies never to be uprooted. On the demise of the Queen, Rawleigh was for raising up an English against a Scottish party; he was for keeping the government in their own hands, and, looking on the successor to the English throne as a foreigner, and his people as a needy race, would have only admitted him on terms; or, as Aubrey hints, was for "setting up a commonwealth." Little dreamed Rawleigh that he was already sold and disposed of; that his friend, Secretary Cecil, was surrounding Durham-House, Rawleigh's town residence, by domestic and midnight spies; and, as the secretary was wont, laying traps to decoy his associate in the councils of Elizabeth into something which might be shifted into a semblance of treason against the future sovereign *.

The train so covertly laid, the mine was sprung at the due hour. Rawleigh's reception by the king was the prognostic of his fall. Rawleigh announced, James exclaimed, *more suo*,—"Rawleigh! Rawleigh! o' my saul, mon, I have heard *rawly* of thee†!" Cecil,

* The extraordinary means of the duplicity of this wily minister are stated by Mr. TYTLER in the Appendix to his "Life of Rawleigh."

† As *Rawleigh*, like all his contemporaries, including Shake-

who had participated in the fall of Essex, the chief of the Scottish party, all expected would have shared in the same royal repulse. *Lady Kildare once aptly described Cecil, when she threatened "to break the neck of that weasel;" and afterwards the Scottish monarch, admiring the quick shiftings and keen scent of the crafty creature, in the playful style of the huntsman, characterised his minister, in his kennel of courtiers, as his "little beagle." "The weasel," had all along, moving to and fro, kept his unobserved course; and, to the admiration of all, now "came out of the chamber like a giant, to run his race for honour and fortune." That astute Machiavel had long prepared staunch friends for himself in well-paid Scots. James was hardly seated on his new throne, when his minister opened one of his political exhibitions by the incomprehensible Cobham conspiracy; and this ingenious artificer of state-plots had knotted the present with one apparently more real; but though they would not hold together, they served to put his friend on his memorable trial. When the eloquence of Rawleigh had baffled his judges, and the evidence failed, Cecil, then sitting in court in the character of a friend, secretly conveyed

speare, wrote his name diversely, so that we are at a loss to pronounce it, this spontaneous sally of the Scottish monarch reveals its real pronunciation; which is also confirmed by a sort of epigram of that day.

an insidious letter, sufficient to serve as an ambiguous plea for a mysterious conviction. Rawleigh was judicially but illegally condemned; and the affair terminated in a burlesque execution, where men were led to the block, and no one suffered decapitation *.

A remarkable circumstance, however, occurred, which must not be passed over in this psychological history of Rawleigh. In the Tower, during the examination of the weak and worthless Cobham, who was shifting evidence, Rawleigh affected a recklessness of life; suddenly, he inflicted upon himself what his enemies afterwards called "the guilty blow in the Tower;" in the blow he did not risk his life, "being, in truth, rather

* The secret history of this state-riddle—the conspiracy of Cobham, a disappointed courtier—as Mr. Lodge observes, might fill a moderate volume of speculations on its darker parts. All historians agree that it must remain insolvable, and "hopelessly obscure." It is, however, opened with great vigour and novelty of research by Mr. TYTLER in the Appendix to his biography of Rawleigh. But he passes over too slightly the conversation and the offer of the "eight thousand crowns;" and "the pension," of which Rawleigh said—"he would tell him more when he saw the money." It is quite evident that Rawleigh had been tampered with by the silly Cobham, whose ricketty brains had been concocting a crude, fantastic plot, which was hardly the initial of one. But Rawleigh had listened; he had not positively refused his participation, neither had he yielded his consent. When "the eight thousand crowns" had safely arrived, where were they to go? Rawleigh declared that "when he saw the money, he would be ready to talk more on the subject." Mr. Tytler, like Sir Walter, is pleased to consider that the whole affair was "one of Lord Cobham's idle conceits."

a cut than a stab" in his breast. Mortified passion may have overcome for a moment the hero whose fortitude had often been more nobly tried; but in my own mind, I cannot avoid including the present incident among those similar minor artifices, designed for some grand effect.

Rawleigh, condemned, was suffered to live twelve years in the Tower, whence he obtained a release, but not a pardon; the condemnation was suspended over his head like the pointed sword, ready to drop on the guest invited to the mockery of a festival. A new secretary, Winwood, and a new favourite, Buckingham, had listened to the vision of a gold mine, and an English colony. The sage, who had passed through that school of wisdom, his own "History of the World," when called into action, was still the same romantic adventurer. What else for him remained in England, but the dream of his early days? The military and the naval writings, as well as the "History of the World," of Rawleigh, had been designed by their great author to mould the genius of that prince to whom he looked for another Elizabethan reign; but Prince Henry had sunk into an untimely grave, and the sovereign who loved as much as any one an awful volume, was deterred from valuing the man.

Rawleigh gathered together all the wrecks of his

battered fortune, and, with a company of adventurers, equipped the fleet which was hastening to found a new empire. Ere its sails were filled with propitious gales, its ruin was prepared. The secret plans of its great conductor, confided to our government, by their order were betrayed to the jealous council of Castille. Lying in sickness, Rawleigh lands on a hostile coast; his son, with filial emulation, combated and fell; his confidential Keymis, whose life was devoted to him, could not endure reproach, and closing his cabin-door, ended his days; and if he himself bore up with life, it was that his life was still due to many. "I could die heart-broken, as Drake and Hawkins had died before, when they failed in their enterprise. My brains are broken, and I cannot write much; I live, and I told you why." But he knew his life was a pledge no longer redeemable. His "rabble of idle rascals" mutinied, till the hope of falling in with the Spanish treasure-fleet lured them homewards. The letters to his wife are among the most tragical communications of a great mind greatly despairing, and may still draw tears.

On Rawleigh's return, a proclamation was issued for his arrest, and he surrendered to his near kinsman, Sir Lewis Stukeley, vice-admiral of Devon. On their journey to London, they were joined by Manoury, a French

physician, not unskilled in chemistry, a favourite study with Rawleigh.

It was in this journey that Rawleigh contrived one of those humiliating stratagems which we have several times noted with astonishment. In a confidential intercourse with the French chemist, he procured drugs by which he was enabled to counterfeit a strange malady. Alas! the great man was himself cozened. Manoury was the most guileful of *Moutons*, and his near kinsman, Stukeley, the most infamous of traitors* !

The conflict of opposite emotions which induced this folly who shall describe? Rawleigh died in the elevation of his magnanimous spirit; as truly great when he took his farewell of his world, as when he closed the last sublime page of his great volume. He knew his fate, and he had come to meet it. The moment was disastrous; the Spanish match lay in one scale, and the head of Rawleigh was put in the other by the implacable Spaniard; and when a state-victim is required, the political balance is rarely regulated by simple justice.

* This incident in the life of Rawleigh is told in the second series of "Curiosities of Literature." I have been enabled to give the secret history of this Sir Lewis Stukeley, who having first despoiled, then betrayed his great kinsman. That history offers one of the most striking instances of moral retribution.

An eminent critic has pronounced, that "THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD by RAWLEIGH, is rather an historical dissertation, than a work rising to the majesty of history."

It sometimes happens that the application of an abstract principle of the critical art to some particular work may tend to injure the writer, without conveying any information to the reader; for thus the rare qualities of originality are wholly passed by, should the masterly genius have composed in a manner unprescribed by any canon of criticism.

Our author was not ignorant of the laws of historical composition, which, he observes, "many had taught, but by no man better, and with greater brevity, than by that excellent learned gentleman, SIR FRANCIS BACON."

The ardent and capacious genius of our author projected a universal history which was to occupy three mighty folios, at a time when our language had not yet produced a single historical work; he had no model to look up to; nor, had there been, was he disposed to be casting in other men's moulds. The design and the execution were a creation of his own. Masses of the most curious parts of learning were to be drawn out of recondite tomes, from the Rabbins, the Fathers, the historians and the poets of every nation; all that the

generations of men have thought, and whatever they have memorably acted. But in this voluminous scroll of time, something was to enter of not less price—what his own searching spirit thought, what his diligence had collected, and farther, what his own eyes had observed in the old and the new worlds. TRUTH and EXPERIENCE were to be the columns which supported and adorned HISTORY. And this we read in "The MIND of the Front," one of those emblematical representations of "the mind" of the author, which the engravers of that day usually rendered less pictorial than perplexing*.

A universal genius was best able to compose a universal history; statesman, soldier, and sage, in writing the "History of the World," how often has Rawleigh become his own historiographer! He had been a pilgrim in many characters; and his philosophy had been exercised in very opposite spheres of human existence. A great commander by land and by sea, he was critical in all the arts of stratography, and delights to illustrate them on every occasion. The danger of having two generals for one army, is exemplified by what he himself had witnessed at Jarnac; in a narra-

* The explanatory stanzas prefixed to this "Mind," though unsubscribed by the name of the writer, were composed by Jonson, for they appear in his works.

tive of Carthage, when the Romans lost their fleet, he points out the advantages of a flying navy, from what had occurred under his own eye in the wars of the Netherlands, and of Portugal; and concludes that "it is more difficult to defend a coast than to invade it." In the midst of a narrative of the siege of a town of Carthage, when the besieged rushed out of the town eager to learn the terms of the capitulation before they were concluded, the Roman general seized on this advantage by entering with his army, without concluding the capitulation. "A similar incident happened when I was a young man in France, of Marshal Monluc, while a parley was held about the surrender; but noble men held this conduct as not honourable." Foreign mercenaries, he observes, are not to be relied on, for at the greatest extremity, they have not only refused to fight, but have passed over to the enemy; or they have become the masters of those who hired them, as the Turks were called in by the Greeks, and the Saxons by the Britons; and here he distinguishes the soldiery consisting of English, French, and Scotch, which established the independence of the Netherlands: in this case, these mercenaries were bound together by one common interest with the people who had required their aid; therefore, these stood in the condition of allies, as well as of foreigners solely retained by pay.

His digressions are never more agreeable than when they become dissertations; the most ordinary events of history assumed a new face by the noble speculations which he builds on them, full of a searching, critical spirit, of sound morality, and of practicable policy; often profound, always eloquent. One on the Mosaic code as a precedent for the laws of other nations, would have delighted Montesquieu. On the inviolabity of oaths, he admirably describes them as "the chains by which freemen are tied to the world." On slavery—on idolatry—on giving the lie—on the point of honour —on the origin of local names of America by their first discoverers—such topics abound in his versatile pages. Even curious matters engaged his attention, and in the new world he inspected nature with the close eye of a naturalist*; nor has he disdained, at times, a pleasant tale. There are few pages of this venerable, but genial volume, where we do not find that it is Rawleigh who speaks or who acts, making legible his secret thoughts, charming the story of four

* Rawleigh notices a singular instinct in the birds in these new regions, which built their nests on the twigs of trees, pendent over the waters, rather than in the branches, to save their young from the attacks of the monkeys. In such relations he is full and particular. He corrects the marvellous accounts of the *Ficus indica*—the Banian, or sacred tree of the Brahmins; we nowhere find such a lively picture of that singular curiosity of nature, the self-planting tree, here minutely described.

thousand years with the pleasures of his own memory.

The actual condition of society; the policies of past governments; the arts, the trades, the inventions of past ages, matters deeply interesting in the history of man, often forgotten, and hardly recoverable, judged that large mind which had so boldly planned the "History of the World," cannot properly be censured as "Digressions." "True it is," he adds, "that I have also made many others, which, if they shall be laid to my charge, I must cast the fault into the great heap of human error. For seeing we digress in all the ways of our lives—yea, seeing the life of man is nothing else but digression, it may the better be excused in writing of their lives and actions. *I am not altogether ignorant in the laws of history and of the kinds.*"

It is evident that our author was conscious that he had struck into a virgin vein, and however amenable to the code of historical composition, very gracefully apologises for indulging the novelty. The novelty indeed was so little comprehended by those gross feeders on the carrion of time who can discover nothing in history but its disjointed and naked facts, that, rejecting every "digression" as interrupting the chronology, they put forth their abridgments; and Alexander Ross rejoiced to call his "The Marrow of History;" but

probably found, to his dismay, that he had only collected the dry bones; and that in all this "History of the World," nothing was more veritable than the author's own emotions. All which these matter-of-fact retailers had so carefully omitted we now class by a title which such writers rarely recognise as the philosophy of history. Great writers admit of no abridgment. If you do not follow the writer through all the ramifications of his ideas, and imbue your mind with the fulness of the author's mind, you can receive only interrupted impressions, and retain but an imperfect and mutilated image of his genius. The happiest of abridgments is the author's own skill in composition: to say all that is necessary and to omit all that is superfluous—this is the secret of abridgment, and there is no other of a great original work.

"The History of the World" appeared as a literary phenomenon, even to the philosophical Hume. He expresses his astonishment at "the extensive genius of the man who being educated amid naval and military enterprises, had *surpassed in the pursuits of literature even those of the most recluse and sedentary lives.*"

This is much from him who has taught us not to wonder but to inquire. Rawleigh however had dropped some hints on his Hebraic studies; acknowledging his ignorance of that recondite language, he was indebted

to some preceding interpreters and to "some learned friends," and he adds with good humour, but with a solemn feeling, "Yet it were not to be wondered at had I been beholding to neither, having had *eleven years' leisure* to obtain the knowledge of that or any other language." It did not occur to our historian that "eleven years" of uninterrupted leisure yields a full amount of "the most recluse and sedentary life." With a universal mind Rawleigh was eager after universal knowledge, and we have positive and collateral evidence that he sought in his learned circle whatever aid the peculiar studies of each individual could afford him.

A circumstance as remarkable as the work itself occurred in the author's long imprisonment. By one of those strange coincidences in human affairs, it happened that in the Tower Rawleigh was surrounded by the highest literary and scientific circle in the nation. Henry, the ninth Earl of Northumberland, on the suspicion of having favoured his relative Piercy, the gunpowder-plot conspirator, was cast into this state-prison, and confined during many years. This earl delighted in what Anthony Wood describes as "the obscure parts of learning." He was a munificent Mecænas, and not only pensioned scientific men, but daily assembled them at his table, and in this intellectual communion participating in their pursuits he passed his life. His learned

society were designated as "the Atlantes of the mathematical world;" but that world had other inhabitants, antiquaries and astrologers, chemists and naturalists. There was seen Thomas Allen, another Roger Bacon, "terrible to the vulgar," famed for his *Bibliotheca Alleniana*, a rich collection of manuscripts, most of which have been preserved in the Bodleian; the name of Allen survives in the ardent commemorations of Camden, of Spelman, and of Selden. He was accompanied by his friend Doctor Dee; but whether Dee ever tried their patience or their wonder by his Diary of Conferences with Spirits we find no record; and by the astronomical Torporley, a disciple of Lucretius, for his philosophy consisted of atoms; several of his manuscripts remain in Sion College. The muster-roll is too long to run over. In this galaxy of the learned, the brightest star was Thomas Hariot, who merited the distinction of being "the universal philosopher;" his inventions in algebra, Descartes when in England silently adopted, but which Dr. Wallis afterwards indignantly reclaimed; his skill in interpreting the text of Homer excited the grateful admiration of Chapman when occupied by his version; Bishop Corbet has described—

"Deep Hariot's mine,
In which there is no dross."

Two others were Walter Warner, who is said to have

suggested to Harvey the great discovery of the circulation of the blood, and Robert Hues, famed for his treatise on the Globes. These, with Hariot, were the earl's constant companions, and at a period when science seemed connected with necromancy, the world distinguished the earl and his three friends as "Henry the Wizzard, and his three Magi." We may regret that no Symposia have come down to us from this learned society in the Tower, which we may consider as the first philosophical society in our country. All these persons, eminent in their day, appear to have written in their various departments, and were inventors in science; yet few of their works have passed through the press. This circumstance is a curious evidence in our literary history that in that day the studious composed their works without any view to their publicity; the difficulty of obtaining a publisher for any work of science might also have conduced to confine their discoveries to their private circle. Some of these learned men probably were uncouth writers; Dee never could end a sentence in his rambling, confused style. Many of these works, scattered in their forlorn state of manuscript, often fell into hands who appropriated them to their own purpose. Even Hariot's treatise, which furnished Descartes with a new idea of the science, was a posthumous publication by his friend Warner, merely

to secure a continuance of the pension which had been granted to him by the Earl of Northumberland.

These philosophers appear to have advanced far into their inquiries, for they were branded by atheism or deism. What therefore has reached us coming from ignorant or prejudiced reporters will not satisfy our curiosity. Of Hariot, Wood tells that "he always undervalued the old story of the creation of the world, and could never believe the trite position *ex nihilo nihil fit.* He made a *philosophical theology*, wherein he cast off the Old Testament, so that consequently the new would have no foundation. He was a deist, and his doctrine he did impart to the Earl of Northumberland and to Sir Walter Rawleigh, when he was compiling his 'History of the World.' He would controvert the matter with eminent divines, and therefore having no good opinion of him, did look on the matter of his death as a judgment for nullifying the Scriptures." Hariot died of a cancer on his lip.

From such accounts we can derive no knowledge of the *philosophical theology* of Hariot. He was the philosopher, however, who went to Virginia with the design of establishing a people of peace, with the Bible in his hand. He taught those children of nature its pure doctrines till they began to idolise the book itself, embracing it, kneeling to it, and rubbing their bodies

with it. This new Manco Capac checked this innocent idolatry, but probably found some difficulty in making them rightly comprehend that the Bible was but a book like any other, made by many hands, but that the spiritual doctrine contained in it was a thing not to be touched nor seen, but to be obeyed. Such a philosopher could he have remained among these Indians would have become the great legislator of a tribe of primitive Christians; and as he actually contrived to construct an alphabet for them, this seems to have been his intention.

The doctrines of Hariot, which Wood has reprobated, certainly were not infused into the pages of Rawleigh; his divinity is never sceptical; his researches only lead to speculations purely ethical and political—what men have done, and what men do*.

Such were the men of science, daily guests in the Tower during the imprisonment of Rawleigh; and when he had constructed his laboratory to pursue his chemical

* The authors of the "General Dictionary" censure Wood for his unauthenticated assertions; and they infer that, as he was thus evidently erroneous in his notion of Rawleigh's history, he may have been equally so in his idea of the philosophical theology of Hariot. Wood, however, would have alleged his authority, though a very indifferent one. We have recently discovered that Wood here was only transcribing the crude hearsays of his friend Aubrey; and, in these matters, the Oxford antiquary, and the "magotie-headed" gossiper, as Wood afterwards found him to be, were equally intelligent.

experiments, he must have multiplied their wonders. With one he had been intimately connected early in life; Hariot had been his mathematical tutor, was domesticated in his house, and became his confidential agent in the expedition to Virginia. Rawleigh had earnestly recommended his friend to the Earl of Northumberland, and Sion House in consequence became for Hariot a home and an observatory.

The scholastic Dr. Burhill is supposed to have been one among the learned friends whose assistance in his Hebraic researches Rawleigh acknowledges. It was such a student that might have led Rawleigh into his singular discussion on the site of paradise. One great name has claimed the tracings of his hand in the "History of the World." Ben Jonson has positively told that he wrote a piece on the Punic wars, which Rawleigh "altered and set in his book." The verses prefixed to the "Mind of the Frontispiece" are Jonson's. There was an intimacy between Jonson and Rawleigh which appears to have been interrupted, and this may possibly have given occasion to the remarkable sharp stricture from Jonson, in his conversation with Drummond, that "Rawleigh esteemed more fame than conscience; the best wits in England were employed in making his 'History of the World.'"

Rawleigh, in this vast and recondite collection of cri-

ticism and chronology, would enrich his volume with the stores accumulated from the sources of brother-minds; it is even said that he submitted his composition to Serjeant Hoskyns, that universal Aristarchus of that day, at whose feet, to use the style of honest Anthony, all poets threw their verses*; but the most material characteristic of his work Rawleigh could borrow from no one—the tone and elevation of his genius.

But if the "History of the World" instructed his contemporaries, there was a greater history in his mind, which had secured the universal acceptance of posterity —the history of his own times. But the age of Elizabeth, in manuscript, might be an act of treason in the court of James the First, in the eyes of his redoubted rival Cecil; he who did not wholly escape from malicious

* Hoskyns wrote many poems. A manuscript volume of his poems, fairly written we may presume for the press, and "bigger than all Donne's works," was "lent by his son Sir Benedict," A. Wood tells us, "who was a man that ran with the usurping Parliament, to a certain person, in 1653, but he could never retrieve it." We are left in the dark to know whether we have lost a great poet or only a loyalist; whether the "certain person" was a parliamentarian *enragé*, or only utterly reckless of a collection of poems "bigger than Dr. Donne's!" One poem of this great critic has come down to us, of which there is more than one manuscript in the Museum, and one in the Ashmolean,—"A Vision," addressed to the king during his confinement, in which he introduces his mother, and his wife, and his child. By the frequency of these copies we find how much temporary passion gave an interest to very indifferent writings. It is printed by Dr. Bliss in the "Athenæ Oxonienses."

applications in writing the history of the world that had passed away, eluded the fatal struggle with contemporary passions. He has himself acquainted us of this loss to our domestic political history: "It will be said by many that I might have been more pleasing to the reader if I had written the story of mine own times, having been permitted to draw water as near the well-head as another. To this I answer, that whosoever in writing a modern history shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth. There is no mistress or guide that hath led her followers and servants into greater miseries. He that goes after her too far off loseth her sight and loseth himself; and that walks after her at a middle distance, I know not whether I should call that kind of course temper or baseness*."

The miscellaneous writings of Rawleigh are so numerous and so various, that Oldys has classed them under the heads, poetical, epistolary, military, maritime, geographical, political, philosophical, and historical†.

---

* Preface to the "History of the World."

† The name of Rawleigh proved too attractive for the booksellers to escape their grasp; they have forged his name on various occasions, and they have done worse; for they have unquestionably adulterated his genuine works by admitting writings which he never could have written. Rawleigh composed some "Instructions to his Son and to Posterity." The publisher of his "Remains" probably

Of a character so exalted and a genius so varied, how has it happened that Gibbon, who had once intended to compose the wondrous tale of his life, has pronounced his character to be "ambiguous;" and that Hume has described it "a great but ill-regulated mind*?

The story of Rawleigh is a moral phenomenon; but what is there that moves in the sphere of humanity, of which, when we discover the principle of action, we cannot calculate even the most eccentric movements? Rawleigh from the first was to be the architect of his own fortunes; this was a calamity with him, for a

---

considered that "The Dutiful Advice of a Loving Son to his Aged Father" must be equally acceptable. Sir Walter had no aged father to address; and if he had, he would not have written such a mean piece of puritanic insolence. I suspect that "The Advice" was nothing but a parody on "The Instructions" by some very witless scribbler.

* Hume was bitterly attacked in the Biographia Britannica by a Dr. Philip Nicoll, one of the writers calling himself one of the proprietors, for his account of the conduct of Rawleigh—art. "Ralegh," note (cc). The spirit of nationality was rife in 1760, when we find that a cruel apology is inflicted on Hume as "a foreigner! for this writer may be allowed the privilege of that plea, as being born and bred and constantly living among a people, and under a constitution, of a very different nature, genius, and temper from the English!" I cannot believe that Hume, to remove the odium of Rawleigh's death from the Scottish monarch, purposely depreciated the hero; but probably looking hastily into the account of Guiana, stuffed with the monstrous tales of a lying Spaniard, and considering the whole to be a gross artifice of the great navigator for an interested purpose, he gave way to his impressions.

perpetual impulse was communicated to the versatility and the boundless capacity of a genius which seemed universal. Soldier and sailor, sage and statesman, he could not escape from the common fate of becoming the creature of circumstance. What vicissitudes! what moral revelations! How he disdained his enviers! His towering ambition paused not in its altitude; he reached its apex, and having accomplished everything, he missed all! He whose life is a life of adventure, who is now the daring child of fortune, and falls to be the miserable heir of misfortune, though glory sometimes disguises his recklessness, is doomed to be often humiliated as well as haughty.

The favourite of his sovereign, thrown amid the contending suitors of a female court, we have found creeping in crooked politics, and intriguing in dark labyrinths. Rawleigh met his evil genius in Cecil; he saw his solitary hope vanish with Prince Henry. Awakening his last energies with the juvenile passion of his early days, he pledged his life on a new adventure—it was his destiny to ascend the scaffold. He was always to be a victim of state. The day of his trial and the hour of his death told to his country whom they had lost. From the most unpopular man in England he became the object of the public sympathy, for they saw the permanent grandeur of the character,

when its lustre was no longer dusked by cloudy interests or temporary passions.

There is no object in human pursuits which the genius of Rawleigh did not embrace. What science was that unwearying mind not busied in? What arts of hoar antiquity did he not love to seek? What sense of the beautiful ever passed transiently over his spirit? His books and his pictures ever accompanied him in his voyages. Even in the short hour before his last morning, is he not still before us, while his midnight pen traces his mortuary verse, perpetuating the emotions of the sage, and of the hero who could not fear death*.

Such is the psychological history of a genius of the first order of minds, whom posterity hails among the founders of our literature.

---

* The Dean of Westminster was astonished at Rawleigh's cheerfulness on the day of his execution, who "made no more of his death than if he had been to take a journey." The divine was fearful that this contempt of death might arise from "a senselessness of his own state," but the hero satisfied the dean that he died "very Christianly." Yet the gossip of Aubrey tells, that "his cousin Whitney said, and I think it is printed, that he spake not one word of Christ, but of the great and incomprehensible God with much zeal and adoration, so that he concluded he was an a-Christ, not an a-theist." In this manner great men were then judged whenever they "ventured at discourse which was unpleasant to the churchmen," as this confused recorder of curious matters has sent down to us. This indicates that Socinian principles were appearing.

THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHER, DR DEE.

At the dawn of philosophy its dreams were not yet dispersed, and philosophers were often in peril of being as imaginative as poets. The arid abstractions of the schoolmen were succeeded by the fanciful visions of the occult philosophers; and both were but preludes to the experimental philosophy of Bacon and Newton, and the metaphysics of Locke. The first illegitimate progeny of science were deemed occult and even magical; while astronomy was bewildered with astrology, chemistry was running into alchemy, and natural philosophy wantoned in the grotesque chimeras of magical phantoms, the philosophers themselves pursued science in a suspicious secresy, and were often imagined to know much more than the human faculties can acquir These anagogical children of reverie, straying beyond "the visible diurnal sphere," elevated above humanity, found no boundary which they did not pass beyond—no profundity which they did not fathom—no altitude on which they did not rest. The credulity of enthusiasts was kept alive by the devices of artful deceivers, and illusion closed in imposture.

Shakespeare, in the person of Prospero, has exhibited

the prevalent notions of the judicial astrologer combined with the adept, whose white magic, as distinguished from the black or demon magic, holds an intercourse with purer spirits. Such a sage was

> ——— "transported,
> And rapt in secret studies;"

that is, in the occult sciences; and he had

> "Volumes that he prized more than his dukedom."

These were alchemical, astrological, and cabalistical treatises. The magical part of "The Tempest," Warton has observed, "is founded on that sort of philosophy which was peculiar to JOHN DEE and his associates, and has been called 'the Rosicrucian.'"

Dr. DEE was a Theurgist, a sort of magician, who imagined that they held communication with angelic spirits, of which he has left us a memorable evidence. His personal history may serve as a canvas for the picture of an occult philosopher—his reveries, his ambition, and his calamity.

Dee was an eminent and singular person, more intimately connected with the patronage of Elizabeth than perhaps has been observed. It was the fate of this scholar to live in the reigns of five of our successive sovereigns, each of whom had some influence on his fortunes. His father, in the household of Henry the Eighth, suffered some "hard-dealing" from

this imperious monarch injurious to the inheritance of the son; the harshness of the sire was considered by the royal children, for Edward granted a pension; Mary, in the day of trial, was favourably disposed towards the philosopher; and Elizabeth, a queen well known for her penurious dispensations, at all times promptly supplied the wants of her careless and dreamy sage.

That decision of character which awaits not for any occasion to reveal itself, broke forth in his college-days. His skill in mathematics, and his astronomical observations, had attracted general notice; and in his twentieth year, Dee ventured on the novel enterprise of conferring personally with the learned of the Netherlands. In the reign of Henry the Eighth, little experimental knowledge was to be gathered out of books. Like the ancient, our insular philosophers early travelled to discover those novelties in science which were often limited to the private circle; there were no Royal or Antiquarian Societies, no "Transactions" of science or the arts. Robert Fludd, the great Rosicrucian, who became more famous than Dee in occult studies, before he gave the world his elaborate labours, passed six years in his travels in France, Germany, and Italy.

Our youthful sage on his return to his college presented them with several curious instruments of science

which were not then always procurable in the shops of mechanics. Philosophers often made as well as invented their implements. The learned Mercator was renowned for his globes; and mathematical instruments, of a novel construction, were the invention of the scientific Frisias.

Our young philosopher, already suspected of a dangerous intimacy with the astral influences, did not quiet the murmurs by his improved dexterity in mechanics. In the elation of youth, he astounded the marvelling fellows of his college. Dee has himself confessed, that "his boyish attempts and exploits scholastical may not be meet to repeat." In a lecture, Dee executed a piece of mechanical invention which, now, would have been pantomimical, but was then necromantic. When a greater magician, Roger Bacon, by his art, had made the apparition of a man to walk from the top of All-Hallows steeple in Oxford to the top of St. Mary's, this optical illusion had endangered his life; and another great occult philosopher set forth a compassionate apology for the science of optics, but could only allege it was not magical, though it seemed so. Two centuries and a half had not sufficed to enlighten the fellows of a college at Oxford.

Dee has suffered hard measure from those who have only judged of him in the last days of his unprotected

distress. In his age, if we except mathematics, there were few demonstrable truths in science, disguised as it was by rank fables and airy hypotheses; nature was not interpreted so often as she was misunderstood. The ideal world seemed hardly more illusive than the material. While his sovereign, and the nation, and foreigners were looking up to the solitary sage, may we not pardon the honest egotism which once declared, that if he had found a Mæcenas, Britain would not have been destitute of an Aristotle? BACON had not yet appeared; and however we may deem of his aspiration, we cannot censure his judgment in discovering there was yet a vacant seat for him who was worthy to fill it.

Dee was an eminent mathematician, but the early bent of his mind was somewhat fanciful; an inextinguishable ambition to fix the admiration of the world worked on a restless temperament and long a vagrant course of life; and his generous impulses burst into the wild exuberances of the reveries of astrology, alchemy, and the cabbala.

The restlessness of a mind ever escaping from the bounded present to the indefinite future, directed his flight to the University of Louvain; there he attracted a noble crowd from the court of Bruxelles, whom he charmed like a new oracle of science. Then he

rambled to Paris, to lecture on his favourite Euclid, explaining the elements not only mathematically, but by their application to natural philosophy, like another Pythagoras. A professorship was offered on any terms; and the curious may still decide on his skill by a remarkable English preface which Dee furnished to the translation of Euclid by Sir Henry Billingsley. Admiration seemed more real to Dee when he attracted it on different spots. Preceded by his reputation, with a name which had received the baptism of fame, he returned homewards, where he had potent friends in Sir John Cheke and in Cecil, and others who had been his auditors or his pupils; and he was pensioned by the youthful Edward.

In the jealous reign of Mary, he gave umbrage by a correspondence with the confidential servants of the Princess Elizabeth; and Dee had now grown into such repute for his occult sciences, that there was little difficulty in accusing him of practising against the queen by enchantments. Cast into prison, the magician witnessed his "bed-fellow," a meek religious man, dragged to the flames, an incident which long after he could not remember without horror. The spirit of the sovereign fails not to betray itself in each succeeding reign. Mary bound men to the stake, Elizabeth sent them forth into new seas and new lands, and the

pacific James, turning them into babbling polemics, only shed much human ink. The inquisitors unexpectedly detected no act of treason; but as possibly he might stand in peril of heresy, they recommended that he should be placed under the surveillance of Bishop Bonner, which probably was a royal protection. It is evident that Mary was as favourably disposed towards the philosopher as were her brother and her sister; and the literary memorial Dee addressed to the queen showed that he had no leisure to become an heresiarch.

Dee proposed "the recovery and preservation of ancient writers and monuments." These had been lamentably dispersed and wasted by the spoilers of the dissolved monasteries. The moment was favourable for the acquisition, not only by obtaining manuscripts, but by procuring transcripts of all which their possessors would not part with. In this memorial Dee has recorded, that Cicero's treatise "De Republica" perished at Canterbury, and it was the single copy which authenticated its existence. With such a collection, he proposed to erect "a library royal"—a future Vatican or a British Museum! A noble design, when as yet no national institution for general learning existed. This glorious opportunity was lost! Governments rarely comprehend those prescient minds which anticipate wants posterity cannot always supply.

The early intercourse of the Princess Elizabeth with our philosopher suffered no interruption, as we shall have occasion to show, during her protracted reign, notwithstanding the ill fame of his awful skill in the occult sciences. We must throw ourselves into his times to judge of the calamity of this celebrity. This and the succeeding age were troubled by the faith of omens, meteors, and of "day-fatality," combined with the astral influences, malignant witchcraft, and horrible magic. It was only at the close of the seventeenth century, in 1682, that Bayle ventured anonymously in his "Thoughts on Comets," cautiously to demonstrate that these fugitive bodies in the heavens had no influence whatever over the cabinets of princes! Our own historian, Arthur Wilson, in describing "a blazing star," opined that it was not sent as "a flambeau" to usher in the funeral of the simple queen of James the First; the Puritan had no notion that heaven would compliment royalty; but he was not the less alarmed for the Protestant interest, as it concerned "the war then breaking out in Bohemia;" and so difficult was it to decide between the two opinions, that Rushworth, who wrote long afterwards, very carefully chronicles both. Such was the philosophy of the Elizabethan age, and truly much later, in France as well as in England.

It was therefore in the spirit of the age that the minister of Elizabeth held a formal conference with Dr. Dee to fix on a fortunate day for the coronation, and which the sage opened to them on "the principles of the most ancient astrologers;" and the privy-council punctually placed the crown on the head of the Queen of England. Nor was this the only occult lore for which his protection of the queen's safety was earnestly sought. Dee one morning was hastily summoned to prevent a sudden mischief impending over her majesty's person. A great puppet of wax, representing the queen, was discovered lying in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, with a huge pin stuck through its breast. Dee undertook to quiet "Her Majesty and the Lords of the Honourable Privy-Council" within a few hours, but first insisted that, in the solemn disenchantment, Mr. Secretary Wilson should stand beside him to witness that Dee only used "godly means." It is not in our histories of England that we learn the real occasion of the coronation-day of Elizabeth, nor of the panic of "the Privy-Council" on the incident in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; yet such domestic annals of a people enter into the national character, and have sometimes strangely influenced it *.

* About the same time, in 1574, Ruggeri, a Florentine, was condemned to the galleys for having conspired against the French

Though Dee was imbued with the occult sciences of his age, he ardently cultivated arts and literature which would have honoured him in the present. He had formed a great library, rich in Irish and Welsh and other ancient manuscripts, which probably no other person then possessed*; an observatory where he watched, to read in the volume of the heavens; a laboratory of chemistry where the furnace rarely ceased; and a collection of philosophical instruments, too many of which were deemed magical. All these attested his energetic pursuits, to the manifold injury of a very moderate fortune, and the carelessness of a life of abstraction and reverie.

But his ambition had accomplished its proud object; and on all public events wherein science was concerned, recourse was had to the sage of Mortlake. Camden refers to Dr. Dee's astronomical observations of a new

monarch in favour of the Duke of Alençon, his brother. The act of treason consisted in making an image of wax, the perfect likeness of Charles the Ninth, which had a heart pricked with pins. This was the exact peril into which our English queen had been cast—probably by some Romanist who fancied himself or herself to be an adept.

* A catalogue of Dr. Dee's library, in his own hand-writing, may be found in Harl. MSS, 1879. Four thousand volumes, "abounding with a curious harvest of books illustrative of the occult art," but it also contained the ancient classics. He expended on his collections the considerable sum of "thirty hundred pounds," as he tells us, for at that day they counted by "hundreds."

star which had gradually vanished, though the celestial apparition had spread great fears and doubts; but our philosopher entertained the Queen the length of three days with the phenomenon. A more important labour was his reformation of the Gregorian Calendar, which even later mathematicians have deemed correct. The versatility of the pursuits of this scientific man was remarkable as their ingenuity. In that reign of maritime enterprise many of our adventurers had taken nominal possession of many new countries, and the Queen had expressed a wish to learn their sites. One day, in her garden at Richmond, Dee unrolled to the royal eye a spacious scroll, hydrographical, geographical, and historical, where the rivers were tracked, and the coasts indented, and the authorities of the records inscribed on its page, by which the sovereign founded her title to dominions of which she had not always heard the names*. The genius of Dee was as erratic as the course of life he shortly fell into, but it kept great objects in view; and, as he projected a national library under Mary when literature itself seemed lost, under Elizabeth, when "this incomparable islandish monarchy" was menaced by the foreigner, he investigated "the art of navigation," and proposed "the

* These ingenious rolls, or maps, are now deposited among the Cottonian manuscripts.

perpetual guard and service of a petty navy royal, continually to be maintained without the Queen's charges or any unpleasant burdens to the Commons." Our inventor was anticipating our future national greatness, and such minds are only comprehended when they can no longer receive our gratitude.

Our author published eight or ten learned works, and left unfinished fifty, some far advanced *.

The imagination of Dee often predominated over his science; while both were mingling in his intellectual habits, each seemed to him to confirm the other. Prone

* The curious catalogue of both is found in the Biog. Britannica. Dee would have printed more of his writings, but he found the printers too often adverse to his hopes, as "few men's studies were in such matters employed." One of his manuscripts was so voluminous, containing an account of his "Inventions," being "greater than the English Bible," that it appeared "so dreadful to the printers," that our philosopher postponed its publication to "a sufficient opportunity," which never occurred.

These unfinished writings are scattered in the COTTONIAN and the ASHMOLEAN Collections, for their learned founders anxiously recovered them.

The naval project appears in a singular volume, entitled "General and Rare Memorials pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation, 1577, folio." The author printed only one hundred copies, which he distributed among confidential friends, patriotically refusing a considerable offer for a copy by a foreign power. This volume is said to be one of the scarcest books in the English language. A copy at the British Museum contains notes in the hand-writing of Dee himself, fraught with his usual sorrows; his representation of his affairs is not luminous, and seems written with a dulled spirit—querulous and involved.

to the mystical lore of what was termed the occult sciences, which in reality are no sciences at all, since whatever remains occult ceases to be science, Dee lost his better genius.

The mathematician whom the sage Burleigh had valued for his correction of the vulgar calendar must have amazed that statesman by a proposal to search for a mine for the royal service! claiming for his sole remuneration a letter patent granting him all *treasure trove*, as, in the barbarous law-French, is termed all wealth hidden in the earth, which, no claimant appearing, becomes appropriated by the sovereign. The mysterious agency of the *virgula divina*, or the divining rod, was to open the undiscovered mine, and to detect in its progress, for the use of the bearer, the unsunned gold or silver which some had been foolish enough to inter and not extract from the earth*.

* The mystery of the divining rod is as ancient as the days of Cicero. The German miners introduced its practice among our Cornish miners. Childrey, in his "Britannia Baconiana, or the Natural Rarities of England, Scotland, and Wales, 1661," cautiously describes, as a disciple of Bacon should, its effects on mines of lead in Somersetshire. Boyle and the Royal Society were perplexed by the evidence. We have accounts from some, unimpeachable for integrity, of the agitation of the divining rod as authentic and incomprehensible as any recorded of animal magnetism. A few years ago, a learned writer in the "Quarterly Review" surprised us by reviving the phenomenon, in the history of it, as performed by a lady of distinction, in the present day, searching for a spring of water.

The luminous genius who had illustrated the demonstrations of Euclid was penetrating into the arcane caverns of the cabbalists, and in a state of spiritual elevation fell into many a dreamy trance. The soul of the mystic would have passed into the world of spiritual existences, but he was not yet blessed with theurgic faculties, and patiently awaited for the elect. If Dee had many reveries, he had also many disciples both of rank and of name. Whatever a mind thus pre-occupied

Many frauds have succeeded by this pretended rod of divination. The reader may consult Le Brun's "Histoire Critique des Pratiques Superstitieuses" for "La Baguette;" but, above all, a philosophical article by the scientific Biot, in Biog. Universelle, art. *Ayman Jacques.*

The divining rod consists simply of a hazel bough forked: the bearer firmly grasps the two pointed ends, holding it before him; it must bend, or become agitated, when it indicates the spot which conceals a spring of water, or buried metal. In the hands of a susceptible agent tremulous nerves, in the solemn operation, would be likely to communicate their irritability to the hazel bough. But who has enjoyed the magic of the *treasure trove*? The divining rod, described as the Mosaical rod, furnishes an incident in "The Antiquary" of Sir Walter Scott, which was probably borrowed from an amusing incident in the Life of Lilly the astrologer; where we discover that David Ramsay, his majesty's clock-maker, having heard of a great treasure in the Cloyster of Westminster Abbey, at midnight came, accompanied by one of the elect, with the Mosaical rods—"on the west side of the Cloyster the hazle rods turned over another." David Ramsay had brought a great sack to hold the treasure, when suddenly all the demons issued out of their beds in a storm, that—"we verily believed the west end of the church would have fallen." The torches were suddenly extinguished, the rods would not move, and they returned home faster than they came.

and pre-disposed earnestly seeks, it usually finds; its own infirm imagination aids the deception of the artful. The elect spirit, long expected, was at last found in the person of Edward Kelley, a young apothecary, but an adept in the secret sciences: his services were engaged at a moderate salary. Kelley had to make his fortune.

This KELLEY, who afterwards became an English alchemist, renowned among the votaries of the hermetic art, and of whom many a golden legend is recorded with which I dare not trust the reader, it appears, once lost his ears at Lancaster for coining; the judges not perhaps distinguishing the process by which the alchemist might have transmuted the baser into the precious metal. This neophyte, moreover, was a wizard—an aspirant in more supernatural arts—an incantator—a spirit-seer! Once with impious temerity he had ventured on questioning the dead! This "deed without a name" was actually perpetrated amid the powers of darkness in the park of Walton-in-the-dale, in the county of Lancaster. A recent corpse was dragged forth from the churchyard; whether the erected spectre made any sign of resuscitation is not recorded, but it probably did—for it spoke! A voice was heard delivering its short but awful responses, sufficient for the evil curiosity of the guardian of a ward, eager to learn the doomsday of that frail mortal's existence.

For this tale our antiquary WEEVER has been quipped by our antiquary ANTHONY à WOOD, for his excessive credulity, as if Anthony would infer that he himself was incredulous on all supernatural disclosures! The authority was however unquestionable, for it came from the agent himself in this dark work, the opener of the grave, the spectator of the grim vaticinator, the listener to the sepulchral voice. He had often related this violation of "God's acre" to many gentlemen in Lancashire, as well as to the faithful scribe of our "Ancient Funeral Monuments."

Many strange unexplained accounts have come down to us where *Voices* have been introduced, and it has been too usual at once to suppose that the attestations were nothing more than what Butler deems "solid lying." Leibnitz, a philosopher who seems to have delighted in the wonderful, gives an account of a dog who spoke different languages; the evidence is undeniable; and certain it is that the docile animal at his master's bidding opened his mouth—and good French or Latin was distinctly heard. When the astrologer Lilly assures us of one of the magical crystal globes or mirrors from whence the spirits absolutely gave responses, he has described their tones: "They speak, like the Irish, *much in the throat.*" "This, if it proves nothing else, will serve to show that the Irish was the

primitive language," sarcastically observes Gifford; but his acumen might have discovered that "it proved" something else, and that Lilly here really delivered a plain truth in this description of the *voices* which gave the responses of the spirits.

The art of the ventriloquist to convey his voice to the place he wills—into the gaunt jaws of a dead man's skull—into the moveable lips of a tutored dog, or into the invisible spirits of a magical globe—may be easily recognised. Ventriloquism has been oftener practised than has been known to the listeners. Speaking *much in the throat* identifies that factitious voice, which, drawing the air into the lungs, proceeds out of the thorax, and not from a lower region, as the ancient etymology indicated. The Pythonesses of the oracles exercised this faculty, and it was not less skilfully, by Edward Kelley.

In the theurgic mysteries Dee would not deviate from what he deemed "the most Christian courses;" fervent orisons and other devotional ceremonies were to hallow the cabbalistical invocations*, and the astrological configurations and hieroglyphical cakes of wax and other magical furniture. Among these was "a show-stone," or an angelical mirror, placed on a pedestal†.

* Sloane MSS., 3191.

† There can be no doubt of the reality of all these magical appa-

By patient inspection at certain more blessed hours, the gifted seer could descry the apparitions of spirits moving within its cloudless orb; for at other times less propitious the surface was indistinct, as if a misty curtain hung over it*.

By what natural progress of incidents the bold inventive genius of Kelley worked this fascination on the fatuity of the visionary might be curious to develop; but he who himself probably had been a dupe was the better adapted to play the impostor. Strange as this incident may appear to us, it was not rare at that day. A communion with invisible spirits entered into the general

---

ratus, for we actually possess them. The magical mirror, having lost its theurgic enchantment, finally was placed among the curiosities of the late Earl of Orford. Lysons describes it as a round piece of volcanic glass finely polished—some one calls it Kennel coal. The hieroglyphical cakes of wax were deposited at the British Museum, probably at the time the precious manuscripts of Dee's conferences with "the Spirits" were so carefully lodged in the Cottonian Collections.

* This superstition retains all its freshness in the East. A magician at Cairo recently,

"Taking in of SHADOWS WITH A GLASS"—(*The Alchemist of Jonson*), has, I believe, been recorded by a noble lord; having startled the lookers-on with one shadow, painfully recognised, and another of a great *bibliophile*, who, seen in the glass, walking in a garden with his hands full of books, was supposed to be the worthy Archdeacon Wrangham. I must however add, that the same magician showed himself very dull to a dear friend of mine; and that his "speculator," a boy called, apparently accidentally, from the street, only displayed his gift in nonsensical mendacity.

creed throughout Europe, and crystal or beryl was the magical medium; but as the gift of *seeing* what was invisible to every one else was reserved for the elect, it was this circumstance which soon led to impostures. Persons even of ordinary rank in life pretended to be what they termed *speculators*, and sometimes women were *speculatrices*. Often by confederacy, and always by a vivacious fancy, these jugglers poured out their several artful revelations. We now may inscribe as an historical fact in the voluminous annals of human folly, from which, however, we have hardly yet wholly escaped, imaginary beings, and incantation of spirits, and all spectral apparitions.

Kelley was now installed into the office of *Skryer;* a term apparently of Dee's invention. Listening to the revelations of angelic spirits and to the mysterious secret, the alchemist inflamed the cabbalistical faith of the visionary. It is certain that Dee now abandoned his mundane studies, and for many a year, through some thousands of pages, when Kelley was in the act of "skrying," sate beside "the show-stone," the eager scribe of those imagined conferences with "the spirits," received, to use his own words, "through the eye and the ear of E. K." Kelley was a person of considerable fancy, which sometimes approached to a poetical imagination; the masquerade of his spiritual beings is

remarkable for its fanciful minuteness. Voices were at times audible to Dee; but the terrific noises of supernatural agency which sometimes accompanied the visions could only have been heard by the poetical ear of Kelley, though assuredly they shook the doctor. I will give the reader a notion of one of these scenes.

E. K. looking into the show-stone, said, "I see a garland of white rose-buds about the border of the stone: they be well opened, but not full out.

Δ. "The great mercies of God be upon us; we beseech him to increase our faith."

E. K. "Amen! But while I consider these buds better they seem rather to be white lilies."

Δ. "The eternal God wipe away our blackness, and make us pure and whiter than snow."

E. K. "They are 72 in number (angels), seeming with their heads *alternatim*, seeming with their heads one towards me and one towards you. A voice cometh shouting out from the lilies, and all the lilies are become on fire. I hear a sound as though it were of many waters poured or streaming down in the clifts of great rocks and mountains. The noise is marvellous great; I hear it as afar off, and through the stone, or as it were of a thousand water-mills going together."

A Voice "*Est. Et quo modo est?*"

ANOTHER VOICE. "*Male et in summo: et mensuratum est.*"

E. K. "I hear a great roaring, as if it were out of a cloud over one's head, not perfectly like thunder."

ANOTHER VOICE. "*The seal is broken!*"

E. K. "Now I see beyond like a furnace-mouth as big as four or five gates of a city, as if it were a quarter of a mile off, with a horrible smother of smoke coming out of it; and by it a great lake of pitch, and it bubbleth or simpereth as water doth when it beginneth to seethe. There standeth by the pit a white man in a white garment tucked up; his face is marvellous fair: this white spiritual creature saith, 'My Lord, *Ascend!*'"

E. K. "Now there cometh out a thing like a lion in the hinder parts, and his fore parts hath many heads of divers fashions upon one trunk; he hath like feathers on his neck; his heads are seven, three on one side, and three on another, and one in the middle, longer than the rest, lying backward to his tail-ward. The white man giveth him a bloody sword, and he taketh it in his fore-foot. The white man tieth this monster's fore-legs with a chain, that he cannot go but as one shackled. Now he giveth the monster a great hammer with a seal at that end where the hammer striketh. The white man has cried with a loud cry, 'A horrible and terrible beast!' The white man taketh the hammer

and striketh him in the forehead of that head which is in the middle. Now all this vision is vanished away: the stone is clear."

On another occasion E. K. says, "I hear a marvellous noise, as of many mountains: which of the mouths do speak I cannot discern. I hear a greater noise still; I never heard any such noise; it is as if half the world were rushing down a hill *."

* In the golden days of animal magnetism, more than forty years ago, I heard many tales, and visited many scenes, where there must have been much imposture practised, more credulity contagious, and much which I never could comprehend. In the magnetic sleep, where the body seemed extinct—and in the luminous crisis, where the soul was wakeful in all its invisible operations—the inspired communicant, undisturbed by the sly contrivances of the unbeliever, seemed transported when and where they listed. A Mr. Baldwin, in 1795, our consul at Alexandria, in search of what he called the Divinity of Truth, imagined he had found it in this new and mystical science. Always seeking for fitting subjects, a cunning Arab long served his purpose on ordinary matters, but it was his fortune to fall on an Italian wanderer far more susceptible of the magnetic influence. For three years, in his own abode, he has chronicled down "The Sittings," as he calls them, where, in the magnetic sleep, the communicant poured forth in verse and prose mysteries and revelations. On his return to England, Mr. Baldwin printed, by Bulmer, in an unpublished quarto, these "Sittings," in the native language of the inspired; as the subject was an improvisatore, it probably cost him little to charm Mr. Baldwin in "celestial colloquy sublime" with answers to most unanswerable inquiries; and descriptions of ecstatic scenes which made the pen tremble with wonder and delight in the hands of the infatuated scribe. Baldwin, with the faith of Dee, wrote down the revelations of *his* Edward Kelley.

During two years, in which Dee deserted his studies and sacrificed his fortune, the name of Dee still remained so eminent that learned foreigners in their visits to England continued their inquiries after him. A Polish prince, Albert a'Laski, who was received with high honours at our court, applied to the Earl of Leicester for an introduction to the great English philosopher, and the Earl appointed a day to dine with Dr. Dee. Then it was that our philosopher disclosed his mortifying condition that he could no longer entertain his noble guests without selling his plate. The Queen instantly sent him forty angels in gold. The illustrious Polander became a constant visitor, was initiated into the theurgic mysteries; there came a whisper from the unseen "spirits" that this palatine of Siradia might yet be the elected King of Poland! Ambitious princes are as credulous as ambitious philosophers. The predictors of a crown, with a royal exchequer from the alchemists, seduced the imagination, and a'Laski invited the sages with their families to reside at his castle.

There the Polish lord seems to have wearied of the angelic communications; he transferred them to the Emperor Rodolph the Second, at Prague. In all the courts of Europe, occult philosophers found a ready admittance.

Dee came auspiciously recommended to the emperor; for our author had formerly dedicated to the emperor's father, Maximilian, his cabalistical volume, which, when admitted to a private interview with Rodolph, the sage beheld lying open on the table *. The introduction of an author to an emperor by his own work, may have something really magical in its effect, provided the spell is not disturbed by him who raised it. In an inflated oration Dee announcing himself like a babbling missionary, as a messenger from angels, the emperor curtly observed that he did not understand Latin! The Pope's Nuncio opportunely demanded that the two English necromancers should be questioned at Rome. Their flight relieved the emperor. A Bohemian count rejoiced to receive the fugitives at his castle of Trebona, where strange alchemical projections of pewter flaggons turned into silver, which the goldsmiths of Prague bought, are attested solemnly by Arthur Dee, the son of the doctor, to the philosophical Sir Thomas Browne. This must have been that day of elation which Dee entered in his diary. "Master Edward Kelley did open the great secret to me. God be thanked!" This

* This volume is Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica, Mathematice, Cabalistice, et Anagogice Explicata*, 1564; a book which Elizabeth lamented she could not comprehend. It is reprinted in the *Theatrum Chymicum Britannicum* of that lover of the occult sciences, Elias Ashmole.

Arthur Dee, indeed, remained an inveterate alchemist all his life; but the man who in his medical character was recommended by James the First to the czar of Russia, and, after several years' residence at Moscow, on his return home, was appointed physician to Charles the First, would be a reputable witness in any court of law *.

Dee and Kelley were abroad living together from 1583 to 1589. Their adventures would form a romance, but I am not writing one. Their condition was mysterious, as were the incidents of their lives. Sometimes reduced to the most pitiable necessities for "meat and drink;" at other times we find Dee travelling with a princely equipage, in three family coaches, a train of waggons, and an escort of fifty horsemen. These extraordinary personages long attracted the wonder of the Continent; but whatever happened, their fortunes

* The often-repeated tales of this vanished alchemy may startle the incredulous; but the dupes and the knaves have been so numerous that we cannot distinguish between them. Sir Humphrey Davy assured me that making gold might be no impossible thing, though, publicly divulged, a very useless discovery. Metals seem to be composite bodies, which nature is perpetually preparing, and it may be reserved for the future researchers in science to trace, and perhaps to imitate, some of these curious operations. Dr. Girtanner of Gottingen predicted, not many years ago, that "In the nineteenth century the transmutation of metals would be generally practised;" a set of kitchen utensils in gold, he assures us, would save us from the deathly oxides of copper, &c.

were variable. The pride of Dee was sensitive—there are querulous entries in his diary—there appeared some false play in his dangerous coadjutor—Kelley was dropping hints that he lived in a miserable state of delusion —preludes to the great rupture! Mephistopheles menaced his victim. It is evident that Kelley determined to break up the profitless partnership and set up for himself. The noise the parties raised in their quarrels on the Continent, induced Elizabeth to command their return *. The alchemist did not return home with Dee. He obtained the patronage of the emperor, and was created a knight; but as usually happened with great alchemists, Sir Edward Kelley was twice cast into prison. Sir Edward, however, continued his correspondence with Dee, and sent her majesty a timely information of some design against her person. This adventurer may appear a very suspicious personage. Lord Burleigh addresses this "Baron of Bohemia," as the minister designates him, with high respect and admiration, for his "virtues, his wisdom, and learning." However, in the same confidential letter, his lordship informs "the good knight" of some malicious reports; that "he did not come home, because

* Harl. MSS., 6986 (26)—A letter from Dr. Dee to the Queen, congratulating her on the defeat of the Armada. He declares that he is ready with Kelley, and their families, to return home. Dated Nov. 1588.

he could not perform that, indeed, which has been reported of him;" and others had gone so far as to deem Sir Edward "an impostor." This letter, written by Burleigh's own hand*, shows the skilful falconer luring the bird. Dee assured the Queen that "the Baron of Bohemia" positively possessed the secret of the great operation. The Queen anxiously concerted measures to secure the escape of Sir Edward Kelley from his second imprisonment. Agents were despatched, the jailers were drugged, the horses were awaiting for the fugitive; scaling the wall, he fell, and died of his contusions, thus abruptly closing the romance of a daring disturbed spirit.

Dee returned to England in December 1589; and presenting himself to the Queen at Richmond, was received, as he was ever accustomed to be, with all graciousness. But the philosopher, after the absence of six years, returning to his studious abode, beheld it nearly dismantled; his chemical apparatus, with all his scientific implements, had been destroyed by a mob, and his library pillaged. Every day this victim of science experienced the effects of popular obloquy. He gathered up what fragments he could; and again rapt in study, he again relapsed into his old wants. The

* This letter, from the Burleigh Papers, is printed by Strype.—*Annals*, iv. 3.

res angusta domi once more disturbed his lares. Yet the Queen was not unmindful of her philosopher; Mr. Cavendish was despatched to assure him that he might freely pursue his studies, and brought a royal Christmas gift of two hundred angels in gold, to be renewed with the season.

But the old man craved more than an uncertain eleemosynary bounty; his creditors multiplied, and the great will forget the man whom they rarely see. Dee has feelingly classed those who had outwearied his generous nature, "the ungrateful and the thankless; and the scorners and disdainers." The royal hand alone could repair his injuries, and vindicate his genius. Dee addressed a memorial to the Queen, praying that a commission might be appointed to inquire into his case, which, as he energetically expressed himself, had been "written with tears of blood." He did not draw up his petition as an illustrious pauper, but as a claimant for services performed.

A commission was immediately assigned, and it was followed by a literary scene of singular novelty.

Dee, sitting in his library, received the royal commissioners. Two tables were arranged; on one lay all the books he had published, with his unfinished manuscripts; the most extraordinary one was an elaborate narrative of the transactions of his whole life. This

manuscript his secretary read, and as it proceeded, from the other table Dee presented the commissioners with every testimonial; these vouchers consisted of royal letters from the Queen, and from princes, ambassadors, and the most illustrious persons of England, and of Europe; passports which traced his routes, and journals which noted his arrivals and departures; grants and appointments, and other remarkable evidences; and when these were wanting, he appealed to living witnesses.

Among the employments which he had filled, he particularly alludes to "a painful journey in the winter season, of more than fifteen hundred miles, to confer with learned physicians on the Continent, about her Majesty's health." He showed the offers of many princes to the English philosopher, to retire to their courts, and the princely establishment at Moscow proffered by the czar; but he had never faltered in his devotion to his sovereign. He appealed to the clerks of the records in the Tower, and to other antiquaries *, for his free distribution of the manuscripts which he had often discovered. He complains that his house at Mortlake was too public for his studies, and incommo-

* We have several manuscript letters which passed between DEE and STOWE. They show all the warmth of their literary intercourse. Dee offers his present aid, and promises his future assistance.

dious for receiving the numerous foreign literati who resorted to him. Of all the promised preferments, he would have chosen the mastership of St. Cross for its seclusion. Here is a great man making great demands, but reposing with dignity on his claims; his wants were urgent, but the penury was not in his spirit. The commissioners, as they listened to this autobiography, must often have raised their eyes in wonder, on the venerable and dignified author before them.

The report was most favourable; the Queen spontaneously declared that Dee should have St. Cross, and the incumbent might be removed to a bishopric. She allotted him a considerable pension, and commanded Lady Howard to write "words of comfort" to his wife, and further sent an immediate supply by the hands of Sir Thomas Gorge. The letter to his wife and the ready money were, however, the only tangible gift, for St. Cross and the pension he never received!

Two years after, we find Dee still memorialising. He published "A Letter Apologetical, with a Plain Demonstration and Fervent Protestation for the Course of the Philosophical Studies of *a Certain Studious Gentleman*, 1599." This was a vindication against the odium of magical practices. At length, the archbishop installed him in the wardenship of Manchester College; but though our adventurer now drew into harbour, it was

his destiny to live in storms. The inmates always suspected him of concealing more secrets of nature than he was willing to impart; and the philosopher who had received from great men in Europe such testimonies of their admiration, now was hourly mortified by the petty malice of the obscure fellows of his college. After several years of contention, he resigned a college which no occult arts he possessed could govern.

His royal patroness was no more. The light and splendour of the court had sunk beneath the horizon; and in the chill evening of his life, the visionary looked up to those who were not susceptible of his innocent sorcery. Still retaining his lofty pretensions, he addressed the king, and afterwards the parliament. He implored to be freed from vulgar calumnies, and to be brought to trial, that a judicial sentence might clear him of all those foul suspicions which had clouded over his days for more than half a century. It is to be regretted that this trial did not take place; the accusations and the defence would have supplied no incurious chapter in the history of the human mind. A necromancer, and a favourite with Elizabeth, was not likely to be tolerated in the court of James the First. Cecil, who when young had been taught by his father to admire the erudition of the reformer of the Gregorian calendar, was not the same person in the court of James

the First as in that of Elizabeth; he resigned the sage to his solitude, and, with the policy of the statesman, only reasonably enough observed, that "Dee would shortly go mad!"

Misfortune could neither break nor change the ambitious spirit of the deserted philosopher. He still dreamed in a spiritual world, which he never saw nor heard, and hopefully went on working his stills, deprived of the powder of projection. He sold his books for a meal; and if the gossiper Aubrey may be trusted, in such daily distress he may have practised on the simplicity of his humble neighbours, by sometimes recovering a stolen basket of linen, though it seems he refused the more solemn conjuration of casting a figure for a stray horse! It is only in this degradation of sordid misery that he is shown to us in the Alchemist of Jonson. Weary, as he aptly expresses himself, of "sailing against the wind's eye," in 1608, in the eighty-first year of his age, he resolved to abandon his native land. There was still another and a better world for the pilgrim of science; and it was during the preparations to rejoin his Continental friends in Germany, that death closed all future sorrows.

It was half a century after the decease of Dr. Dee, that the learned Meric Casaubon amazed the world by publishing the large folio containing "A True and Faithful

Relation of what passed many Years between Dr. JOHN DEE and SOME SPIRITS, 1659," from a copy in the Cottonian Library. Yet is this huge volume but a torso; the mighty fragments, however, were recovered from the mischances of a kitchen fire, by Elias Ashmole, a virtuoso in alchemy and astrology, who toiled and trembled over the mystical and almost the interminable quires. Such is the fate of books! the world will for ever want the glorious fragments of Tacitus and Livy, but they have Dee passingly entire *.

MERIC CASAUBON was the learned son of a more learned father, but his erudition much exceeded his judgment. He had written a treatise against the delusions of "Enthusiasm," from whence the author derived but little benefit; for he demonstrated the existence of witches. Yet Meric Casaubon, meek and honest, was solicited by Cromwell to become his historiographer; but from principle hē declined the profit and the honour; during the Oliverian rule, he became an hypochondriac, and has prefixed an hypochondriacal preface to this unparalleled volume. His faith is obsequious, and he confirms the verity of these conferences with "spirits," by showing that others before Dee had enjoyed such

* The curious may find a copious narrative of the recovery of these manuscripts, written by Ashmole himself, printed in Ayscough's Catalogue of MSS., p. 371, where also he is referred to the autographs of Dee, in the British Museum.

visitations. The fascination of a conference with "spirits" must have entered into the creed even of higher philosophers; for we are startled by discovering that the great Leibnitz observed on this preface, that "it deserves to be translated *as well as the work itself* !*"

When this book of marvels was first published, the world was overcome by the revelations. Those saintly personages whose combined wisdom then assisted the councils of England, Owen, Goodwin, Nye, and others of that sort, held a solemn consistory for the suppression of the book. They entertained a violent suspicion that the whole of this incomprehensible jargon was a covert design by some of the Church of England party, of a mockery of their own style, to expose the whole sainthood, who pretended so greatly to inspiration. But the bomb exploded at once, and spread in all directions; and ere they could fit and unfit their textual debates, the book had been eagerly bought, and placed far beyond the reach of suppression †.

The "true relation of what passed many years between Dr. DEE and SOME SPIRITS" long excited curiosity which no one presumed to satisfy. During

---

* General Dictionary, by BIRCH, art. *Meric Casaubon*—Note B.

† This literary anecdote I derive from a manuscript and contemporary note in the printed copy at the British Museum.

no less a period than five-and-twenty years was Dee recording what he terms his "Actions with Spirits," for all was written by his own hand. It would be an extravagant inference to conclude that a person of blameless character and grave habits would persevere through a good portion of his life in the profitless design of leaving a monument of posthumous folly solely to mystify posterity. Some fools of learning indeed have busied themselves in forging antiquities to bewilder some of their successors, but these malicious labours were the freaks of idle hours, not the devotion of a life. Even the imposture of Kelley will not wholly account for the credulity of Dee; for many years after their separation, and to his last days, Dee sought for and at length found another "Skryer*." Are we to resolve these "Actions with Spirits" by the visions of another sage, a person eminent for his science, and a Rosicrucian of our own times,—that illustrious Emanuel Sweden-

* This office of "skryer" is ambiguous—no dictionary will assist us. "In the year before he died, 1607, Dee procured one Bartholomew Hickman to serve him *in the same manner* as Kelley had done."—*Biog. Britt.*, v. 43. In what manner? Did Hickman pretend to descry the "actions of the spirits" in the show-stone, or only to drudge on the powder of projection? Forty years have elapsed since I turned over the interminable "Diary," and now my eyes are dim and my courage gone. I suspect, however, that that magical herb—eye-bright, however administered, will fail to penetrate through the darkness which surrounds the chaotic mass of manuscript.

burg, who, in his reveries communed with spirits and angels? It would thus be a great psychological phenomenon which remains unsolved.

No one has noticed that a secret communication, uninterrupted through the protracted reign of Elizabeth, existed between the Queen and the philosopher. The deep interest her majesty took in his welfare is strikingly revealed to us. Dee, in his frequent troubles, had constantly recourse to the Queen, and she was ever prompt at his call. The personal attentions of the Queen often gratified his master-passion—often she sent kind messages by her ladies and her courtiers—often was he received at Greenwich, Richmond, and at Windsor; and he was singularly honoured by her majesty's visits at his house in Mortlake. The Queen would sometimes appear waiting before his garden, when he would approach to kiss her hand and solve some difficult inquiry she had prepared for him. On one of these occasions Dee exhibited to her majesty a concave mirror; a glass which had provoked too much awful discussion, but which would charm the Queen while this Sir David Brewster of his age condescended to explain the optical illusions. When Dee, in his travels, was detained by sickness in Lorraine, her majesty despatched two of her own physicians to attend on this valued patient. The Queen incessantly made

golden promises of preferment; many eminent appointments were fixed on. He had too a patron in Leicester the favourite of Elizabeth, for in that terrible state-libel of "Leicester's Commonwealth," among the instruments of that earl's dark agencies we discover "Dee and Allen, two atheists, for figuring and conjuring," that is, for astrological diagrams and magical invocations*! As, notwithstanding the profusion of the queen's designs for his promotion, he received but little, and that little late, the sincerity of the royal patron has been arraigned. Mysterious as the philosopher's cabalistic jargon with which he sometimes entertained her, her majesty seems to have remunerated empty phrases by providing notional places; but Elizabeth may not have deserved this hard censure; she unfailingly supplied her money-gifts, a certain evidence of her sincerity! The truth seems to be that royal promises may be frustrated by intervening competitors and ministerial expedients. At the court, the evil genius of Dee stood ever by his side, saluting the philosopher with no friendly voice, as "the arch-conjuror of the

* It requires a late posterity to correct the gross prejudices of contemporaries; it was not the least of the honours which Dee enjoyed to have been closely united with the studies of the "atheist" Allen, "the father of all learning and virtuous industry, infinitely beloved and admired by the court and the university." The ardent eulogy of Wood is earnest.—*Athen. Oxon.*, ii. 541.

whole kingdom!" The philosopher struggled with the unconquerable prejudices of the age.

If we imagine that Elizabeth only looked on Dee as the great alchemist who was to replenish her coffers, or the mystic who propounded the world of spirits, this would not account for the Queen permitting Dee to remain on the Continent during six years. Had such been the Queen's hopes, she would have hermetically sealed the philosopher in his house at Mortlake, where in her rides to Richmond she might conveniently have watched the progress of gold-making and listened to the theurgic revelations. Never would she have left this wanderer from court to court, with the chance of conveying to other princes such inappreciable results of the occult sciences.

What then was the cause of this intimate intercourse of the Queen with Dr. Dee; and what the occasion of that mysterious journey of fifteen hundred miles in the winter season to consult physicians on her majesty's health, of which he had reminded the Queen by her commissioners, but which they could not have comprehended? Did these mysterious physicians reside in one particular locality; and in the vast intervening distance were there no skilful physicians equally able for consultation?

A casual hint dropped by Lilly, the famous astrologer, will unveil the mysterious life of Dee, during his

six years' residence abroad. Lilly tells us that "For many years, in search of the profounder studies, he travelled into foreign parts; *to be serious*, he was Queen Elizabeth's intelligencer, and had a salary for his maintenance from the secretaries of state." Lilly, who is correct in his statements except on the fabulous narratives of his professional art, must have written from some fact known to him; and it harmonises with an ingenious theory to explain the unintelligible diary of Dee, suggested by Dr. Robert Hooke, the eminent mathematician.

Hooke, himself a great inventor in science, entertained a very high notion of the scientific character of Dee, and of his curiosity and dexterity in the philosophical arts—optics, perspective, and mechanics. Deeply versed in chemistry, mathematics, and the prevalent study of astrology, like another Roger Bacon (or rather a Baptista Porta), delighting in the marvellous of philosophical experiments, he was sent abroad to amuse foreign princes, while he was really engaged by Elizabeth in state affairs. Hooke, by turning over the awful tome, and comparing several circumstances with the history of his own life, was led to conclude that "all which relates to the spirits, their names, speeches, shows, noises, clothing, actions, &c., were all *cryptography;* feigned relations, concealing true ones of a

very different nature. It was to prevent any accident, lest his papers should fall into hostile hands, that he preferred they should appear as the effusions of a visionary, rather than the secret history of a real spy. When the spirits are described as using inarticulate words, unpronounceable according to the letters in which they are written, he conjectured that this gibberish would be understood by that book of Enoch which Dee prized so highly, and which Hooke considered to contain the cypher. Hooke, however, has not decyphered any of these inarticulate words; but as the book of Enoch seems still to exist, this Apocalypse may yet receive its commentator, a task which it appears Dr. Adam Clarke once himself contemplated*.

There is one fatal objection to this ingenious theory of cryptography; this astounding diary opens long before Dee went abroad, and was continued long after his return, when it does not appear that he was employed in affairs of state.

* "As it is asserted that the six books of Mysteries transcribed from the papers of Dr. John Dee, by Elias Ashmole, Esqre., preserved in the Sloane Library, (Plutarch XVI, G,) are a collection of papers relative to State Transactions between Elizabeth, her Ministers, and different Foreign Powers, in which Dr. Dee was employed sometimes as an official agent openly, and at other times as a Spy, I purpose to make an extract from the whole work, and endeavour, if possible, to get a key to open the Mysteries. A. C."—*Cat. of Adam Clarke's MSS.*

THE ROSACRUSIAN FLUDD.

THE confraternity of the Rose-cross long attracted public notice. Congenial with the more ancient free-masonry, it was probably designed for a more intellectual order; it was entitled "The Enlightened," "The Immortal," and "The Invisible." Its name has been frequently used to veil mysteries, to disguise secret agents, and to carry on those artful impostures which we know have been practised on infirm credulity by the dealers in thaumaturgical arts, to a very recent period. The modern illuminati, of whom not many years past we heard so much, are conjectured to have branched out of the sublime society of the Rose-cross.

This mystical order sprung up among that mystical people, the Germans, who are to this day debating on its origin, for, like other secret societies, its concealed source eludes the search. It was at the beginning of the seventeenth century that a German divine, John Valentine Andreæ, a scholar of enlarged genius, in his controversial writings amused his readers by certain mysterious allusions to a society for the regeneration of science and religion; in the ambiguity of his language, it remained doubtful whether the society was already

instituted, or was to be instituted. Suddenly a new name was noised through Europe, the name of Christian Rosencreutz, the founder three centuries back of a secret society, and a eulogy of the order was dispersed in five different languages.

The name of the founder seemed as mystical as the secret order, the Rose and the Cross*. The Rose, with the Germans, which was placed in the centre of their ceiling, was the emblem of domestic confidence, whence we have our phrase "under the rose;" and the cross, the consecrated symbol of Christianity, described the order's holy end; such notions might suit a mystical divine†. In the legend the visionary founder was said to have brought from Palestine all the secrets of nature and of art, the elixir of longevity, and the stone so vainly called philosophical‡.

* Fuller's amusing explanation of the term Rosa-crusian was written without any knowledge of the supposititious founder. He says—"Sure I am that a Rose is the sweetest of flowers, and a Cross accounted the sacredest of forms and figures, so that much of eminency must be imported in their composition."—*Fuller's Worthies.*

† The chemists, in the style of their arcana, explain the term by the mystical union, in their secret operations, of the dew and the light. They derive the dew from the Latin *Ros*, and, in the figure of a cross ×, they trace the three letters which compose the word *Lux*—light. Mosheim is positive in the accuracy of his information. I would not answer for my own, though somewhat more reasonable; it is indeed difficult to ascertain the origin of the name of a society which probably never had an existence.

‡ In the Harleian MSS., from 6481 to 6486, are several Rosa-

If to some the society had a problematical existence, others were convinced of its reality; learned men became its disciples, its defenders; and one eminent person published its laws and its customs. Michael Maier, the physician of the emperor Rodolph, who had ennobled him for his services, having become initiated by some adepts, travelled over all Germany seeking every brother, and from their confidential instruction collected their laws and customs. At the same time, ROBERT FLUDD, a learned physician of our own country, distinguished for his science and his mysticism, introduced Rosacrusianism into England; its fervent disciple, he furnished an apology for the mystical brotherhood when it seemed to require one.

The arcane tomes of Fludd often spread, and still with "the Elect" may yet spread, an inebriating banquet of "the occult sciences"—all the reveries of the ancient Cabalists, the abstractions of the lower Platonists, and the fancies of the modern Paracelsians, all that is mysterious and incomprehensible, with the rich condiment of science. There are some eyes which would still pierce into truths muffled in jargon and rhapsody, and dwell on the images of realities in the delirious dreams of the learned.

---

crusian writings, some translated from the Latin by one Peter Smart, and others by a Dr. Rudd, who appears to have been a profound adept.

Two worlds, "The Macrocosm," or the great visible world of nature, and "the Microcrosm," or the little world of man, form the comprehensive view, designed, to use Fludd's own terms as "an Encyclophy, or Epitome of all arts and sciences*." This Rosacrusian philosopher seeks for man in nature herself, and watches that creative power in her little mortal miniatures. In his Mosaic philosophy, founded on the first chapter of Genesis, our seer, standing in the midst of Chaos, separates the three principles of the creation—the palpable darkness—the movement of the waters—at length the divine light! The corporeity of angels and devils is distinguished on the principle of *rarum et densum*, thin or thick. Angelic beings, through their transparency, reflect the luminous Creator; but, externally formed of the most spiritual part of water or air, by contracting their vaporous subtilty, may "visibly and organically talk with man." The devils are of a heavy gross air; so Satan, the apostle called, "the prince of air;" but in touch they are excessive cold, because the spirit by which they live—as this philosopher proceeds to demonstrate—drawn and contracted into the centre, the circumference of

* These are his words in reply to his adversary Foster, the only work which he published in English, in consequence of the attack being in the vernacular idiom. The term here introduced into the language is, perhaps, our most ancient authority for the modern term *Encyclopædia*, which Chambers curtailed to *Cyclopædia*.

dilated air remains icy cold. From angels and demons, the Rosacrusian would approach even to the Divinity; calculating the infinite by his geometry, he reveals the nature of the Divine Being, as "a pure monad, including in itself all numbers." A paradoxical expression, lying more in the words than the idea, which called down an anathema on the impiety of our Theosophist, for ascribing "composition unto God." The occult philosopher warded off this perilous stroke. "If I have said that God is in composition, I mean it not as a part compounding, but as the sole compounder, in the apostolic style, "He is over all, and in all." He detects the origin of evil in the union of the sexes; the sensual organs of the mother of mankind were first opened by the fruit which blasted the future human race. He broods over the mystery of life—production and corruption—regeneration and resurrection! On the lighter topics of mortal studies he displays ingenious conceptions. The title of one of his treatises is *De Naturæ Simia*, or "the Ape of Nature," that is, ART! a single image, but a fertile principle.

Sympathies and antipathies, divine and human, are among the mysteries of our nature. By two universal principles, the boreal, or condensing power of cold, and the austral, or the rarefaction of heat, impulsion and repulsion, our physician explains the active operations

in the human frame—notions not wholly fanciful; but, at once medical and magical, this doctrine led him into one of the most extraordinary conceptions of mystical invention, yet which long survived the inventor; so seductive were the first follies of science.

Man exists in the perpetual opposition of sympathies and antipathies; and the Cabalist in the human frame beheld the contests of spirits, benevolent or malign, trooping on the four viewless winds which were to be submitted to his occult potentiality. Nor was the physician unsuccessful, for in the sweetness of his elocution, pleasant fancies and elevated conceptions operated on the charmed faith of his imaginative patients.

The mysterious qualities of the magnet were held by Fludd as nothing less than an angelical effluvia. In his "Mystic Anatomy," to heal the wounds of a person, miraculously, at any distance, he prescribed a Cabalistical, Astrological, and Magnetic Unguent. A drop of blood obtained from the wound mixed with this unguent, and the unguent applied to the identical instrument which inflicted the wound, would, however distant the patient resided, act and heal by the virtue of sympathy. This singular operation was ludicrously named "the weapon-salve."

Fludd not only produces the attestations of eminent persons, who, in charity we may believe, imagined that

they had perfectly succeeded in practising his "mystic anatomy," but he also alleges for its authority the practice of Paul, who cured diseases by only requiring that the handkerchiefs and aprons of patients should be brought to him. Hardly a single extravagance of the Paracelsian fancy of Fludd but rests on some Scriptural authority—on some fictitious statement,—or some credulous imagination. Fludd, indeed, as our plain Oxford antiquary shrewdly opineth, was "strangely profound in obscure matters*." A curious tract was published by FLUDD, to clear himself from the odium of magical dealings, in reply to a fiery parson, one Foster, who took an extraordinary mode of getting his book read, by nailing it at the door of the Rosacrusian at night, that it might be turned over in the morning by the whole parish! This was "A Sponge to Wipe away the Weapon-Salve," showing, that "to cure by applying the salve to the weapon, is magical and unlawful." The parson evidently supposed that it did cure! Fludd replied by "The Squeezing of Parson

* The collected writings of ROBERT FLUDD, under the latinised name *De Fluctibus*, should form six volumes folio. His *Philosophia Mosaica* has been translated, 1659, fo. He makes Moses a great Rosacrusian. The secret brotherhood must be still willing to give costly prices for their treasure. At the recent sale of Mr. Hibbert the "Opera" of Fludd obtained twenty pounds! The copy was doubtless "very fine," but the price was surely cabalistical. Nor are these tomes slightly valued on the Continent.

Foster's Sponge. 1631, 4to."—"to crush and squeeze his sponge, and make it by force to vomit up again the truth which it hath devoured." Our sage throughout displays the most tempered disposition, and the most fervent genius; but the nonsense is equally curious.

We smile at the *sympathy* of "the weapon-salve;" but we must not forget that this occult power was the received philosophy of the days of our Rosacrusian. Who has not heard of "the sympathetic powder" of Sir Kenelm Digby, by which the bloody garter of James Howell was cured, and consequently its pleasant owner, without his own knowledge? or of the "sympathetic needles" of the great author of "Vulgar Errors," by which, though somewhat perplexed, he concluded that two lovers might correspond invisibly? and above all others, the warts of the illustrious Verulam, by sympathy with the lard which had rubbed them, wasting away as the lard rotted when nailed on the chamber window? Lord Bacon acquaints us that "It is constantly received and avouched, that *the anointing of the weapon that maketh the wound* will heal the wound itself *." Indeed, Lord Bacon himself had discovered as magical a sympathy, for he presented

* *Lord Bacon's Natural History*, Cent. x. 998.—"In this experiment, upon the relation of men of credit, though myself as *yet* am not fully inclined to believe it," his lordship gives ten notes or points as extraordinary as "the ointment" itself.

Prince Henry as "the first fruits of his philosophy, *a sympathising stone,* made of several mixtures, to know the heart of man," whose "operative gravity, magnetic and magical, would show by the hand that held it whether the heart was warm and affectionate." The philosophy of that day was infinitely more amusing than our own "exact" sciences!

We may smile at jargon in which we have not been initiated, at whimsical combinations we do not fancy, at analogies where we lose all semblance, and at fables which we know to be nothing more; but we may credit that these mystical terms of the learned FLUDD conceal many profound and original views, and many truths not yet patent. It is enough that one of the deepest scholars, our illustrious SELDEN, highly appreciated the volumes and their author. It is indeed remarkable that Bayle, Niceron, and other literary historians, have not ventured to lay their hands on this ark of theosophical science; too modest to dispute, or too generous to attack: unlike the great adversary of Fludd, Père Mersenne, who denounced the Rosacrusian to Europe as a caco-magician, who had ensured for himself perdition throughout eternity.

Père Mersenne, at Paris, stood at the head of the mathematical class, the early companion, and to his last day the earnest advocate, of Descartes. That great

philosopher was secretly disposed not to reject all the reveries of the occult philosophers. It is certain that he had listened with complacency to the universal elixir, which was to preserve human life to an indefinite period; and one of his disciples, when he heard of his death, persisted in not crediting the account. His own vortices displayed the picturesque fancy of a Rosacrusian; and moreover, likewise, he was calumniated as an atheist. Père Mersenne not only defended his friend, but, to clear the French philosopher of any such disposition, he attacked the Rosacrusians themselves. Too vehement in his theological hatreds, he dared to publish too long a nomenclature of the atheists of his times *; and among Machiavel, Cardan, Campanella, and Vanini, appears the name of our pious Fludd. Mersenne expressed his astonishment that James the First suffered such a . an to live and to write.

On this occasion, Fludd was more fortunate than Dee. He obtained an interview with his learned sovereign, to clear himself of "the Frier's scandalous report." He found his majesty "regally learned and gracious; excellent and subtile in his inquisitive objections, and instead of a check, I had much grace

* This list appeared in some Commentaries on Genesis, but was suppressed in most of the copies; the whole has, however, been recovered by Chauffepié in his Dictionary.

and honour from him, and I found him my kingly patron all the days of his life." Mersenne, notwithstanding the odium he cast on the personal character of Fludd, was willing to bribe the Heresiarch, for he offered to unite with him in any work for the correction of science and art, provided Fludd would return to that Catholic creed which his ancestors had professed. "I tell this to my countrymen's shame," exclaims Fludd, "who, instead of encouraging me in my labours, as by letters from Polonia, Suevia, Prussia, Germany, Transylvania, France and Italy, I have had, do pursue me with malice, which, when a learned German heard of, it reminded him of the speech of Christ, that 'no man is a prophet in his own country.' Without any bragging of my knowledge, be it spoken, I speak this feelingly; but a guiltless conscience bids me be patient."

The writings of Fludd are all composed in Latin; it is remarkable that the works of an English author, residing in England, should be printed at Frankfort, Oppenheim, and Gouda. This singularity is accounted for by the author himself. Fludd, in one respect, resembled Dee; he could find no English printers who would venture on their publication. When Foster insinuated that his character as a magician was so notorious, that he dared not print at home, Fludd

tells his curious story: "I sent my writings beyond the seas, because our home-born printers demanded of me five hundred pounds to print the first volume, and to find the cuts in copper; but beyond the seas it was printed at no cost of mine, and as I could wish; and I had sixteen copies sent me over, with forty pounds in gold, as an unexpected gratuity for it." It is evident, that throughout Europe, they were infinitely more inquisitive in their occult speculations than we in England, and however this may now seem to our credit, certainly our incuriosity was not then a consequence of our superior science, for he whose mighty mind was to give a new and enduring impulse to the study of nature, who was to teach us how to philosophise, and was now drawing us out of this dark forest of the human intellect into the lucid expanse of his creative mind, was himself still fascinated by magical sympathies, surmised why witches eat human flesh, and instructed us in the doctrine of spirits, angelic or demoniac. Bacon would have elucidated the theurgy of Dee, and the imaginative mysticism of the Rosacrusian.

BACON.

In the age of Elizabeth the English mind took its first bent; a new-born impulse in the nation everywhere was working out its religion, its legislation, and its literature. In every class of genius there existed nothing to copy; everything that was to be great was to find a beginning. Those maritime adventurers in this reign who sailed to discover new regions, and those heroes whose chivalric spirit was errant in the marshes of Holland, were not more enterprising than the creators of our peaceful literature.

Among these first Inventors—our epical Spenser, our dramatic Shakespeare and Jonson, our Hooker, who sounded the depths of the origin of law, and our Rawleigh, who first opened the history of mankind—at length appeared the philosopher who proclaimed a new philosophy, emancipating the human mind by breaking the chains of scholastic antiquity. He was a singular being who is recognised without his name.

Aristotle, in taking possession of all the regions of knowledge, from the first had assumed a universal monarchy, more real than that of his regal pupil, for he had subjugated the minds of generation after gene-

ration. Through a long succession of ages, and amid both extinct and new religions, the writings of the mighty Stagyrite, however long known by mutilated and unfaithful versions, were equally studied by the Mahometan Arabian and the Rabbinical Hebrew, and, during the scholastic ages, were even placed by the side, and sometimes above, the gospel; and the ten categories, which pretended to classify every object of human apprehension, were held as another revelation. Centuries succeeded to centuries, and the learned went on translating, commenting, and interpreting the sacred obscurity or the autocratical edict of a genius whose lofty omniscience seemed to partake in some degree of divinity itself.

But from this passive obedience to a single encyclopedic mind, a fatal consequence ensued for mankind. The schoolmen had formed, as Lord Bacon has nobly expressed himself, "an unhallowed conjunction of divine with human matters;" theology itself was turned into a system, drawn out of the artificial arrangements of Aristotle; they made their orthodoxy dependent on "the scholastic gibberish*;" and to doubt any

* The Abate ANDRES, in his erudite "Origine &c. d'ogni Letteratura," gives this remarkable description—"*i* GHIRIBIZZI *della Dialettica e Metafisica d'Aristotele.*" As we are at a loss to discover the origin of the term *gibberish*, and as it is suitable to the present occasion, may we conjecture that we have here found it?—xii. 26.

doctrine of "the philosopher," as Aristotle was paramountly called, might be to sin by a syllogism—heretical, if not atheistical. In reality it was to contend, without any possibility of escape, with the ecclesiastical establishment, whose integrity was based on the immoveable conformity of all human opinions. Every university in Europe, whose honours and emoluments arose from their Aristotelian chairs, stood as the sentinels of each intellectual fortress. Speculative philosophy could therefore no further advance; it could not pass that inviolable circle which had circumscribed the universal knowledge of the human race. No one dared to think his own thoughts, to observe his own observations, lest by some fortuitous discovery, in differing from the Aristotelian dialectic, he might lapse from his Christianity. The scholastical sects were still agitating the same topics; for the same barbarous terms supplied, on all occasions, verbal disputations, which even bloody frays could never terminate.

If we imagine that this awful fabric of the Aristotelian or scholastic philosophy was first shaken by the Verulamian, we should be conferring on a single individual a sudden influence which was far more progressive. In a great revolution, whence we date a new era, we are apt to lose sight of those devious paths and those marking incidents which in all human affairs are the pro-

gnostics and the preparations; the history of the human mind would be imperfectly revealed, should we not trace the great inventors in their precursors.

Early in the sixteenth century appeared simultaneously a number of extraordinary geniuses. An age of philosophical inventors seemed to arise; a new generation, who, each in his own way, were emancipating themselves from the dogmas of the ancient dictator. This revolt against the old scholastics broke forth in Italy, in Spain, in France, in Germany, and even reached our shores. These philosophers were the contemporaries of Luther: they had not engaged in his theological reformation, but it is more than probable that they had caught the inspiration of his hardy spirit. We are indeed told that the famous Cornelius Agrippa, though he could not desert the Rome of his patrons, yet saw with satisfaction its great pontiff attacked by Luther; as Erasmus and others equally delighted to satirise all the scholastic monkery*. Luther too made common cause with them, in the demolition of that ancient edifice of scholastic superstition which, under the supremacy of Aristotle, barred out every free inquiry.

Of these eminent men, an elegant scholar, Ludovicus Vives, by birth a Spaniard, had been invited to the

* Enfield, ii. 448.

English court by our Henry the Eighth, to be the preceptor of the Princess Mary. Vives too was the friend of Erasmus; but while that facetious sage only expended his raillery on the scholastic madness, Vives formally attacked the chief, whose final authority he declared had hitherto solely rested on the indolence of the human mind. Ramus, in France, advanced with more impetuous fury; he held a public disputation against the paramount authority of the Stagyrite in philosophy; and in his "Aristotelian Animadversions" he profanely shivered into atoms of absurdity the syllogistic method, and substituted for the logic of Aristotle one of his own, which was long received in all the schools of the Reformed, for Ramus was a Huguenot. This innovator was denounced to the magistrate, for, by opposing Aristotle, he had committed open hostility against religion and learning! The erudite Abate Andres, probably an Aristotelian at heart, observes, in noticing the continued persecutions of this bold spirit, that, "to tell the truth, Ramus injured himself far more than the Aristotelian doctrine which he had impugned*"—and true enough, if it were a rival Aristotelian who cast Ramus out of the window, to be massacred by the mob on St. Bartholomew's

* Andres "Dell' Origine e Progressi d'ogni Letteratura," xv. 165.

day. Two eminent scholars of Italy contested more successfully the doctrines of Aristotle: Patricius collected everything he could to degrade and depreciate that philosopher, and to elevate the more seductive and imaginative Plato. He asserted that Aristotle was the plagiarist of other writers, whose writings he invariably affected to contemn; and he went so far as to suggest to the Pope to prohibit the teaching of the Aristotelian doctrines in the schools; for the doctrines of Plato more harmoniously accorded with the Christian faith. Less learned, but more original than Patricius, the Neapolitan Telesius struck out a new mode of philosophising. The study of mathematics had indicated to Telesius a severe process in his investigations of nature, and had taught him to reject those conjectural solutions of the phenomena of the material world—subtleties and fictions which had led Aristotle into many errors, and whose universal authority had swayed opinions through successive ages. "Telesius," says Lord Bacon, "hath renewed the tenet of Parmenides, and is the best of our novelists*." Lord Bacon considered the Telesian system worthy of his development and his refutation. But, by his physical system, Telesius had broken the spell, and sent forth the naturalist to scrutinise more closely into nature; and

* Montagu's Bacon, iv. 46.

possibly this Neapolitan sage may have kindled the first spark in the experimental philosophy of Bacon.

All these were eminent philosophers who had indignantly rejected the eternal babble of the scholastics, and the vain dicta of the peripatetics; and in the same cycle were others more erratic and fantastic. These bold artificers of novel systems of philosophy had not unsuccessfully attacked the dogmas of Aristotle, but to little purpose, while they were substituting their own. The prevalent agitation of the philosophical spirit, now impetuous and disturbed, shot forth mighty impulses in imaginary directions, and created chimeras. Agrippa and Paracelsus, Jordano Bruno, Cardan and Campanella, played their "fantastic tricks," till the patient genius of the new philosophy arose simultaneously in the Italian Galileo and the founder of the Verulamian method.

Amid the ruins of these systems of philosophies, it was not with their fallen columns that Lord Bacon designed to construct a new philosophy of his own—a system in opposition to other systems. He would hold no controversies; for refutations were useless if the method he invented was a right one. He would not even be the founder of a sect, for he presumed not to establish a philosophy, but to show how we should philosophise. The father of experimental philosophy

delivered no "opinions," but "a work;" patient observation, practical results, or new and enlarged sciences, "not to be found in the space of a single age, but through a succession of generations." D'Alembert observed, "The Baconian philosophy was too wise to astonish." His early sagacity had detected the fatal error of all system-makers; each, to give coherence to his hypothesis, had recourse to some occult operation, and sometimes had ventured to give it a name which was nothing more than an abstract notion, and not a reality ascertained to exist in nature. The Platonist had buried his lofty head amid the clouds of theology, beyond the aspirations of man: the Aristotelian, by the syllogistic method of reasoning, had invented a mere instrument of perpetual disputation, without the acquisition of knowledge; and in the law which governed the material world, when Democritus had conceived his atom, and endowed it with a desire to appetency to move with other atoms, or Telesius imagined with cold and heat to find the first beginnings of motion—what had they but contracted nature within the bars of their systems, while she was perpetually escaping from them? The greater philosopher sought to follow nature through her paths, to be "her servant and interpreter;" or, as he has also expressed it, "to subdue nature by yielding to her."

Lord Bacon was conscious of the slow progress of truth; he has himself appealed to distant ages. So progressive is human reason, that a novel system, at its first announcement, has been resisted as the most dangerous innovation, or rejected as utterly false; yet at a subsequent period the first promulgator who had struck into the right road is censured, not for his temerity, but for his timidity, in not having advanced to its termination, and laying the burden on posterity to demonstrate that which he had only surmised or assumed. It is left to another generation to shoot their arrow forth a truer aim, far more distantly. Some of the most important results in philosophical inquiries by men who have advanced beyond their own age, have been subjected to this inconvenience; and we now are familiarised to axioms and principles, requiring no further demonstration, which in their original discovery were condemned as dangerous and erroneous; for the most novel principles must be disputed before they can be demonstrated, till time in silence seals its decree with authority.

Some discoveries have required almost a century to be received, while some truths remain still problematical, and, like the ether of Newton, but a mere hypothesis. What is the wisdom of the wise but a state of progression? and the inventor has to encounter even the

hostility of his brothers in science; even Lord Bacon himself was the victim of his own idols of the den, those fallacies that originate from the peculiar character of the man; for by undervaluing the science of mathematics, he refused his assent to the Copernican system.

The celebrity of Lord Bacon was often distinct from the Baconian philosophy at home, a circumstance which concerns the history of our vernacular literature. The lofty pretensions of a new way to "The Advancement of Learning," and the "Novum Organum" of an art of invention, to invent arts, were long a veiled mystery to the English public, who were deterred from its study by the most offuscating translations of the Latin originals. English readers recognised in Lord Bacon, not the interpreter of Nature through all her works, but the interpreter of man to man of their motives and their actions, in his "Sermones Fideles," those "Essaies" which "come home to our business and to our bosoms." Such readers were left to wonder how the historian of "The Winds," and of "Life and Death"—the gatherer of medical receipts and of masses of natural history, amid all such minute processes of experiments and inductions, groping in tangible matter, as it seemed to ordinary eyes, could in the mere naturalist be the creator of a new philosophy of intellectual energy.

The ethical sage who had unfolded the volume of the heart they delightfully comprehended, but how the mind itself stood connected with the outward phenomena of nature remained long an enigma for the men of the world. Lord Bacon, in his dread to trust the mutability of our language placed by the side of the universal language of the learned which fifteen centuries had fixed sacred from innovation, had concluded that the modern languages will "at one time or another play the bankrupt with books." The sage who, in his sanguine confidence in futurity, had predicted that "third period of time which will far surpass that of the Grecian and Roman learning," had not, however, contemplated on a national idiom; nor in that noble prospect of time had he anticipated a race of the European learned whose vernacular prose would create words beyond the reach of the languages of antiquity. No work in our native idiom had yet taken a station. The volume of Hooker we know not how he read; but the copiousness of the diction little accorded with the English of the learned Lord Chancellor, who had pressed the compactness of his aphoristic sentences into the brevity of Seneca, but with a weight of thought no Roman, if we except Tacitus, has attained. Rawleigh and Jonson were but contemporaries, unsanctioned by time; nor could he have looked even on them as

modellers for him whose own genius was still more prodigally opulent, though not always with the most difficult taste.

Lord Bacon, therefore, decided to compose his "Instauratio Magna" in Latin. Dedicating the Latin version of the "Advancement of Learning" to the Prince, he observed, "It is a work I think will live, and be a *citizen of the world, as English books are not.*" Lord Bacon saw "bankruptcy in our language," and houseless wanderers in our books. The commonwealth of letters had yet no existence. Haunted by this desolating notion that there was no perpetuity in English writings, he rested not till his own were translated by himself and his friends, Jonson, and Hobbes, and Herbert; and often enlarging these Latin versions, some of his English compositions remain, in some respect, imperfect, when compared with those subsequent revisions in the Latin translations.

By trusting his genius to a foreign tongue, Lord Bacon has dimmed its lustre; the vitality of his thoughts in their original force, the spontaneity of his mind in all its raciness, all those fortuitous strokes which are the felicities of genius, were lost to him who had condemned himself to the Roman yoke. Professor Playfair always preferred quoting the original English of those passages of the treatise "*De Augmentis*

Scientiarum," which had first appeared in "The Advancement of Learning." The felicity of many of those fine or forcible conceptions are emasculated in a foreign and artificial idiom; and the invention of novel terms in an ancient language left it often in a clouded obscurity.

The hand of Lord Bacon had already moulded the language at pleasure, and he might have preceded his friend Hobbes in the lucidity of a philosophical style. The style of Lord Bacon is stamped with the originality of the age, and is as peculiar to him as was that of Shakespeare to the poet. He is not only the wittiest of writers in his remote allusions, but poetical in his fanciful conceptions. His style long served for a model to many succeeding writers. One of the most striking imitations is that curious folio of secret history, and brilliant sententiousness, and witty pedantry, the life of Archbishop Williams by Bishop HACKET. It was with declining spirit Lord Bacon composed his "History of Henry the Seventh;" it was an oblation to majesty; the king himself was his critic; and the Solomon, as he terms Henry the Seventh, was that image of peaceful sovereignty which James affected.

He who thought that the language would have failed him, has himself failed to the language, and we have lost an English classic. Since the experimental philo-

sophy arose out of practical discoveries, it should not have been limited to recluse students, but open to the practitioners not yet philosophers, now condemned to study it by translations of a translation. It required two centuries before the writings of Bacon reached the many. Now, a single volume, in the most popular form, places them in the hands of artisans and artists, who are to learn from them to think, to observe, and to invent.

The first modern edition of the collected writings of Lord Bacon was that by Blackbourne in 1730. It probably awoke the public attention; but English readers eager to possess themselves of the Baconian philosophy were still doomed to their old ignorance, for no one was yet to be found bold enough to risk versions, which in the mere translation often require to be elucidated. This first edition, however, hastened the arduous task of "methodising" the philosophy of Bacon in English, by Dr. PETER SHAW, in 1733, who then suggested that the noble Baconian scheme had not been "sufficiently understood and regarded." This Dr. SHAW was one of the court physicians, attached to scientific pursuits, which he usefully displayed by popular lectures and writings, on subjects with which the public were then not familiar. Imbued with the genius of Bacon, this diligent student unfortunately

had a genius of his own; he fancied that he could reconstruct the works of our great philosopher, by a more perfect arrangement. He separated, or he joined; he classed, and he new-named; and not the least curious of his singularities is that of assigning right principles for his wrong doings. He did not abridge his author; for justly he observes, great works admit of no abridgment; but to shorten their extent, he took the liberty of what he terms "dropping," that is, "leaving out." Of his translations of the Latin originals, of which he experienced all the difficulty, he observes, that "a direct translation would have left the works more obscure than they are," and therefore he adopted what he terms "an open version." A precise notion of this mode of free translation, it might be difficult to fix on; it would be too open if it admitted what was not in the original, or if it suffered what was essential to escape. His irremissible sin was that of "modernising the English" of Lord Bacon. The most racy and picturesque expressions of our elder writers were then to be weakened down to a vapid colloquial style. Willymot had translated Lord Bacon's "Essays" from the Latin, and thus substituted his own loose incondite sentences, which he deemed "more fashionable language," for the brilliancy or the energy of Lord Bacon's native vein. Dr. Shaw's three goodly quartos, however, long conveyed in

some shape to the English public the Baconian philosophy. There is something still seductive in these fair volumes, with their copious index, and a glossary of the philosophical terms invented by Bacon; I loved them in the early days of my studies; and they have been deemed worthy to be revived in a late edition.

In my youth, the illustrious name of Lord Bacon was more familiar to readers than his works, and they were more frequently reminded of the Lord Chancellor by the immortal verse of Pope, than by that life of Bacon by Mallet, which may be read without discovering that the subject was the father of modern philosophy, excepting that in the last page, as if accidentally, there occurs a slight mention of the Great Instauration itself! The very choice of Mallet, in 1740, for an editor of Lord Bacon, is a striking evidence how imperfectly the genius of the Instaurator of sciences was comprehended.

The psychological history of Lord Bacon has all that oneness which is the perfection of mind. We see him in his boyhood, studious of the phenomena of nature, meditating on the multiplication of echoes at the brick-conduit, near his father's house; there he sought to discover the laws of sound; as in his latest days, when on the snowy road an experiment suddenly occurred, "touching the conservation and the induration of bodies," whether snow could not preserve flesh equally

with salt. Alighting from his carriage, with his own hands he assisted the experiment, and was struck by that chilliness which, a few days after, closed in death; yet the dying naturalist, too weak to write the last letter he dictated, expressed his satisfaction that the experiment "answered excellently well."

But he who, by the cruelty of fortune and mortal infirmity, lived many lives in the span of one short life, ever wrestling with Nature to subdue her, could never subdue himself by himself. He idolised state and magnificence in his own person; the brilliancy of his robes and the blaze of his equipage his imagination seemed to feed on; he loved to be gazed on in the streets, and to be wondered at in the cabinet; but with this feminine weakness, this philosopher was still so philosophic as to scorn the least prudential care of his fortune. So that, while he was enamoured of wealth, he could not bring himself down to the love of money. Participating in the corruptions of the age, he was himself incorruptible; the Lord Chancellor never gave a partial or unjust sentence, and Rushworth has told us, that not one of his decrees was ever reversed. Such a man was not made to crouch and to fawn, to breathe the infection of a corrupted court, to make himself the scape-goat in the mysterious darkness of court-intrigues; but he was this man of wretchedness!

Truly he exclaimed one day, in grasping a volume, For this only am I fitted. The intellectual architect who had modelled his house of Solomon, and should have been for ever the ideal inhabitant of that palace of the mind, was the tenant of an abode of disorder, where every one was master but its owner, a maculated man seeking to shelter himself in dejection and in shade. Whisperers, surmisers, evil eyes and evil tongues, the domestic asp, whose bite sends poison into the veins of him on whom it hangs—these were his familiars, while his abstracted mind was dictating to his chaplain the laws and economy of nature.

Yet there were some better spirits in the mansion of Gorhambury, and even in the obscurity of Gray's Inn, who have left testimonies of their devotion to the great man long after his death. In the psychological history of Lord Bacon, we must not pass by the psychological monument which the affectionate Sir Thomas Meautys, who, by his desire, lies buried at his feet, raised to his master. The design is as original as it is grand, and is said to have been the invention of Sir Henry Wotton, who, in his long residence abroad, had formed a refined taste for the arts which were yet strangers in England. The simplicity of our ancestors had placed their sculptured figures recumbent on their tombs; the taste of Wotton raised the marble figure to imitate life itself,

and to give the mind of the original to its image. The monument of Bacon exhibits the great philosopher seated in profound contemplation in his habitual attitude, for the inscription records for posterity, *Sic sedebat* *.

* See "Curiosities of Literature," art. "Bacon at Home."

THE FIRST FOUNDER OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY.

THE first marked advancement in the progress of the national understanding was made by a new race of public benefactors, who, in their munificence, no longer endowing obsolete superstitions, and inefficient or misplaced charities, erected libraries and opened academies; founders of those habitations of knowledge whose doors open to the bidding of all comers.

To the privacy and the silent labours of some men of letters and some lovers of the arts, usually classed under the general designation of COLLECTORS, literary Europe, for the great part, owes its public museums and its public libraries. It was their ripe knowledge only which could have created them, their opulence only which could render them worthy of a nation's purchase, or of its acceptance, when in their generous enthusiasm they consecrated the intellectual gift for their countrymen.

These collections could only have acquired their strength by their growth, for gradual were their acquisitions and innumerable were their details; they claimed the sleepless vigilance of a whole life, the devotion of a whole fortune, and often that moral

intrepidity which wrestled with insurmountable difficulties. We may admire the generous enthusiasm whose opulence was solely directed to enrich what hereafter was to be consecrated as public property; but it has not always received the notice and the eulogy so largely its due. It is but bare justice to distinguish these men from their numerous brothers whose collections have terminated with themselves, known only to posterity by their posthumous catalogues—the sole record that these collectors were great buyers and more famous sellers. Of many of the FOUNDERS of public collections the names are not familiar to the reader, though some have sometimes been identified with their more celebrated collections, from the gratitude of a succeeding age.

A collection formed by a single mind, skilled in its favourite pursuit, becomes the tangible depository of the thoughts of its owner; there is a unity in this labour of love, and a secret connexion through its dependent parts. Thus we are told that Cecil's library was the best for history; Walsingham's for policy; Arundel's for heraldry; Cotton's for antiquity; and Usher's for divinity. The completion of such a collection reflects the perfect image of the mind of the philosopher, the philologist, the antiquary, the naturalist, the scientific or the legal character, who into one

locality has gathered together and arranged this furniture of the human intellect.

To disperse their collections would be, to these elect spirits, to resolve them back into their first elements—to scatter them in the air, or to mingle them with the dust *. Happily for mankind, these have been men to whom the perpetuity of their intellectual associations was a future existence. Conscious that their hands had fastened links in the unbroken chain of human inquiry, they left the legacy to the world. The creators of these collections have often betrayed their anxiety to preserve them distinct and entire. Confident I am that such was the real feeling of a recent celebrated collector. The rich and peculiar collection of manuscripts, and of rare and chosen volumes, of FRANCIS DOUCE, from his earliest days had been the objects of his incessant cares. With means extremely restricted, but with a mind which no obstructions could swerve from its direct course, through many years he accomplished a glorious design. Our modest antiquary startled the most curi-

* Sir Simonds d'Ewes feelingly describes in his will, his "precious library." "It is my inviolable injunction that it be kept entire, and not sold, divided, or dissipated." It was not, however, to be locked up from the public good. Such was the feeling of an eminent antiquary.

A later Sir Simonds d'Ewes was an extravagant man, and seems to have sold everything about 1716, when the collection passed into the possession of the Earl of Oxford.

ous, not only of his countrymen but of foreigners, by his knowledge, diversified as his own unrivalled collections, in the recondite literature of the middle ages, and whatever exhibited the manners, the customs, and the arts of every people and of every age. Late in life he accidentally became the possessor of a considerable fortune, and having decided that this work of his life should be a public inheritance, he seemed at a loss where it might at once rest in security, and lie patent for the world. The idea of its dispersion was very painful, for he was aware that the singleness of design which had assembled such various matters together could never be resumed by another. He often regretted that in the great national repository of literature the collection would merge into the universal mass. It was about this time that we visited together the great library of Oxford. Douce contemplated in the Bodleian that arch over which is placed the portrait of SELDEN, and the library of Selden preserved entire; the antiquary's closet which holds the great topographical collections of Gough; and the distinct shelves dedicated to the small Shakespearean library of MALONE. He observed that the collections of Rawlinson, of Tanner, and of others, had preserved their identity by their separation. This was the subject of our conversation. At this moment Douce must have

decided on the locality where his precious collection was to find a perpetual abode; for it was immediately on his return home that our literary antiquary bequeathed his collection to the Bodleian Library, where it now occupies more than one apartment.

To the anxious cares of such founders of public collections England, as well as Italy and France, owes a national debt; nor can we pass over in silence the man to whom first occurred the happy idea of instituting a library which should have for its owners his own fellow-citizens. A Florentine merchant, emancipated from the thraldom of traffic, vowed himself to the pursuits of literature, and, just before the art of printing was practised, to the preservation of manuscripts, which he not only multiplied by his unwearied hand, but was the first of that race of critics who amended the texts of the early copyists. What he could not purchase, his pure zeal was not the less solicitous to preserve. Boccaccio had bequeathed his own library to a convent in Florence, and its sight produced that effect on him which the library of Shakespeare, had it been preserved, might have had on an Englishman; and since he could not possess it, he built an apartment solely to preserve it distinct from any other collection.

At a period when the owners of manuscripts were so avaricious of their possessions that they refused their

loan, and were frugal even in allowing a sight of their leaves, the hardy generosity of this Florentine merchant conceived one of the most important designs for the interests of learning;—to invite readers, he bequeathed his own as A PUBLIC LIBRARY*. He who occupied but a private station, first offered Europe a model of patriotic greatness which princes and nobles in their magnificence would emulate. It has been said that the founder of this public library at Florence had only revived the noble design of the ancients, who had displayed their affection for literature by even bestowing their own names on public libraries; but this must not detract from the true glory of the merchant of Florence; it was at least an idea which had wholly escaped the less liberal of his learned contemporaries.

Sir THOMAS BODLEY may be considered as the first founder of a public library in this country, raised by the hand of an individual. A picture of the obstructions, the anxieties, the hopes, and the disappointments of the founder of the Bodleian, exhibits a person of rank and opulence submitting even to minute drudgery, and to the most humiliating solicitations, and busily occupied by a foreign as well as a domestic correspondence, to accomplish what he long despaired of—

* Tiraboschi, VI. pt. i. 131.

a library adequate to the wants of every English student.

Bodley, in the sketch of his own life, betrays that early book-love which subsequently broke out into that noble passion for "his reverend mother, the University of Oxford." Sir Thomas Bodley had ably served in some of the highest state-employments; but, at length, discovered the secret pathway to escape from "court contentions;" and this he found when busying himself with a vast ideal library—the future Bodleian! Long, indeed, it was but ideal; the labour of his day, the dream of his night, so slowly rose the reality of the fabric. It was difficult to determine on the class or the worth of authors—often rejecting, always augmenting, still consulting, now advising, or being advised; sometimes irresolute, and at others decisive; now exulting, and now despondent. However fervid was his noble enthusiasm for literature, and for his library, not less remarkable was that provident sagacity which he combined with it, and by which only he could carry on the vast design.

What were the emotions of Bodley through this long period, what his first intentions, and what his immutable decision, have fortunately been laid open to us in a close correspondence with his first librarian. Our parent-founder of a public library, with the forcible

simplicity of the natural colloquial style of that day, has developed his own character. "Examining exactly for the rest of my life what course I might take, and having sought, as I thought, all the ways to the wood, to select the most proper, I concluded, at the last, to set up my staff at the library door in Oxon; being thoroughly persuaded, that in my solitude and surcease from the commonwealth affairs, I could not busy myself to better purpose." He early discovered that the formation of his library required the co-operation of many favourable circumstances: "some kind of knowledge, some purse-ability, great store of honourable friends; else it would prove a vain attempt and inconsiderate." After many perplexities, the great resolve seemed to sanction the act, and he exclaims—"The project is cast, and whether I live or die, to such ends altogether I address my thoughts and deeds!" Such was the solemn pledge, and such the deed of gift, which Bodley, in the greatness of his mind, contracted with posterity.

But the minor cares and the minuter anxieties were to open on him; and it must be confessed that he tried the patient duties of the learned Dr. James, whom he had judiciously elected for the first librarian, but who often vents a groan on his interminable labours. Sir Thomas gently reproaches him; "I am toiled exceed-

ingly, no less than yourself, with writing, buying, binding, disposing, &c.; but I am fed with pleasure of seeing the end." Bodley had not only to form a universal library, but to build one on the desolate ruins of that founded by Duke Humphrey, whose royal name could not save his books and manuscripts, which had all been purloined or wasted. The pledges left for their loan not being worth half the value of the books, the volumes were never returned; and those which remained in the reign of Edward the Sixth were burned as "superstitious," for their rubrics and illuminations. The history of this library might have deterred our new founder, by reminding him of the fate which may await even on public libraries. At all events, for many years it required all his fortitude to encounter a rabble of master-carpenters, joiners, carvers, glaziers, builders, claspers, and stringers, and the chain-smiths; for at that day books were chained to their shelves, with chains long enough to reach the desk. A book was tethered, and could never stray from its paddock. Then came the classification and the arrangements! discussions not easily to be adjusted with his librarian, whether a book should be classed as a work of theology or of politics? Sir Thomas found an incessant business at London in packing up "dry fats," or vats of books, barging them for Oxford; he was receiving fresh sup-

plies from Italy, from Spain, from Turkey, and designed to send a scholar to travel in the East, to collect Arabic and Persian books, on which he sagaciously observed, that "in process of time, by the extraordinary diligence of some one student, these Eastern languages may be readily understood." Bodley anticipated our Society for Oriental literature.

But not merely solicitous to erect a vast library, Bodley was equally anxious to consecrate the spot to study itself. He is uneasy at too public an admission, lest idlers should mix among the students, and, as he plainly tells, "be daily pestering the room with their gazing and babbling, and trampling up and down, disturbing the real studious." With what fervour he rejoices when, at length, he lived to witness the day of the opening of the library, and found that "all proceeded orderly, and with such silence!" But although he had bestowed all his cares and his fortune on this institution, it still was but an infant, and he had to look towards spirits as enlarged as his own, to protect the orphan of the public. It met with some who adopted it, and Bodley had their names inscribed in the register of this public library; but he was as cautious as he was courteous—the vain were not to be gratified for penurious gifts. Books, and not names, were wanted. At first, impatiently zealous, he murmurs of "promises

received for performances." But latterly, he had occasion to exhort the university to mark by their particular acknowledgments the donations in volumes or in money. The honourable roll on which the names are inscribed, includes not only those of the most eminent of our country, but also of several ladies, who rivalled those heroes and statesmen, who had the honour of laying the foundation of the Bodleian Library *.

In Sir Thomas Bodley's character we view the conscious dignity of a great design, yet combined with the sedate reflection of a man practised in the world. There were certain traits of vanity, which may give a colour to the insinuations of some—who might consider they had been deprived of legacies—that it was his enormous vanity which raised this edifice of learning. It is amusing to discover, that when the Bishop of Exeter proposed to visit the library, a letter of Sir Thomas immediately precedes his visitor. "I pray you, observe his speeches, and liking or disliking, and in your next let me know it." When James the First was preparing to visit the library, he furnishes hints to the librarian for his speech to the literary monarch: "It must not carry greater length than for half a

* See Gutch's edition of Wood's "Annals of the University of Oxford," vol. i. pt. ii. p. 928.

quarter of an hour's utterance. It must be short and sweet, and full of stuff." The librarian was desirous to hide Buchanan when the king came down to Oxford; but Bodley probably not approving the concealment of any of his literary stores, observed, "It will not avail to conceal him in his desk since he is in the catalogue, nor have we any reason to take any notice of the king's dislike; but," he warily adds, "should it excite his majesty's notice, we must allege that the books were put there in the Queen's time." But nothing save the most delicate attention towards an author could have prompted his order concerning Coryat the traveller, who had presented his book to the library. On the author's coming to Oxford, Sir Thomas desired that "it should be placed in such a manner, that when the author came down, it may seem to magnify the author and the book." In his ardour for the general interests of his library, Bodley absolutely insisted that his librarian should persevere in his forlorn fellowship, for "marriage," opined the founder of the Bodleian Library, "is too full of domestical impeachments to afford him so much time from his private affairs." The doctor decided against the celibacy of a librarian, and was gravely admonished on the absurdity of such conduct in one who had the care of a public library! for "it was opening a gap to disorder hereafter." With

a happier prescience, Bodley foresaw that race of generous spirits who, long after, and at distinct intervals, have carried on his great views. Listen to the simplicity and force of the venerable style of our first founder of a PUBLIC LIBRARY.

"We cannot but presume that, casting (counting) what number of noble benefactors have already concurred in a FERVOUR OF AFFECTION to that PUBLIC PLACE OF STUDY, we shall be sure in TIME TO COME to find some OTHERS OF THE LIKE DISPOSITION to the advancement of learning *."

With such a hallowed purpose ever before him, can we conceive the agonies of the founder of a public library, on being for ever denied an entrance into it? and yet such was the fate of one of the most illustrious of this race. The mournful history of the founder of the Cottonian Library will ever excite the regrets of a grateful posterity, and its catastrophe will witness how far above life he loved and valued his collected lore! It happened that among the many rare manuscripts

* The vigilant curiosity of Tom Hearne, the antiquary, collected the singular correspondence of the Founder of the Bodleian Library with Dr. James, the first librarian, and published it under the title of "Reliquiæ Bodleianæ, or Some Genuine Remains of Sir Thomas Bodley," 1703, 8vo. The curious reader will find in Gutch's edition of Wood's "Annals of the University of Oxford" many letters by Bodley, and his liberal endowments to provide a fixed revenue after his decease.

collected by Sir ROBERT COTTON, one reached his hands, which struck him by the singularity of the subject; it was a political theory to show the kings of England "how to bridle the impertinency of Parliaments." An unfaithful amanuensis, the son of the Dr. James whom we have just noticed, took copies and sold them to the curious. When the original was at length traced to the Cottonian collection, Sir Robert was sued in the Star-chamber, and considered as the author of a work whose tendency was to enslave the nation. It was long afterwards discovered that this manuscript had been originally written by Sir Robert Dudley, when in exile at Florence. Cotton was now denied all access to his library; his spirits sunk in the blackest melancholy; and he declared to an intimate friend, that "those who had locked up his library from him had broken his heart." Now deprived of that learned crowd who once were flowing into his house, consulting and arranging his precious manuscripts; torn away from the delightful business of his life, and in torment at the doubtful fate of that manuscript collection, which had consumed forty years at every personal sacrifice to form it for the "use and service of posterity," he sunk at the sudden stroke. In the course of a few weeks, he was so worn by injured feelings, that from a ruddy-complexioned man, "his face was wholly changed into

a grim blackish paleness, near to the resemblance and hue of a dead visage." Such is the expression of one who knew him well. Before he died, Sir Robert requested the learned Spelman to acquaint the Privy Council, that "their so long detaining his books from him had been the cause of his mortal malady." "On this message," says the writer of a manuscript letter of the day, "the Lord Privy Seal came to Sir Robert, when it was too late to comfort him, from the king, from whom also the Earl of Dorset came within half an hour of Sir Robert's death, to condole with Sir Thomas Cotton, his son, for his father's death; and with an assurance that as his majesty loved his father, so he would continue his love to him; Sir Robert hath intailed his library of books as sure as he can make it upon his son and his posterity. If Sir Robert's heart could be ripped up, his library would appear in it, as Calais in Queen Mary's." Such is the affecting fate of the founder of the Cottonian Library, that great individual whose sole labour silently formed our national antiquities, and endowed his country with this wealth of manuscripts.

EARLY WRITERS, THEIR DREAD OF THE PRESS; THE TRANSITION TO AUTHORS BY PROFESSION.

At the close of the reign of Elizabeth, the public, awakening at the first dawn of knowledge, with their stirring passions and their eager curiosity, found their wants supplied by a new race of "ready writers," who now teased the groaning press—a diversified race of miscellaneous writers, who had discovered the wants of the people for books which excited their sympathies and reflected their experience, and who caught on their fugitive pages the manners and the passions of their contemporaries. No subject was too mean to be treated; and had domestic encyclopedias been then invented, these would have been precisely the library the people required: but now, every book was to be separately worked. The indiscriminate curiosity of an uneducated people was gratified by immature knowledge; but it was essential to amuse as well as to inform: hence that multitude of fugitive subjects. The mart of literature opened, and with the book-manufactory, in the language of that primeval critic, Webbe, of innumerable sorts of English books, and infinite fardles of printed pamphlets, "all shops were stuffed."

It has been attempted to fix on the name of that great patriarch, the Abraham of our Israel, who first invented our own book-craft; but it would be indiscreet to assign the honour to any particular person, or even to inquire whether the cupidity of the book-vender first set to work the ingenuity of the book-weaver. Who first dipped his silver pen into his golden ink, and who first conceived the notion of this literary alchemy, which transmutes paper into gold or lead? It was, I believe, no solitary invention; the rush of "authors by profession" was simultaneous.

Former writers had fearfully courted fame, they were the children of the pleasures of the pen; these were a hardier race, who at once seized on popularity; and a new trade was opened by the arts of authorship. In the primitive age of publication, before there existed "a reading public," literary productions were often anonymous, or, which answered the same purpose, they wore the mask of a fictitious name, and were pseudonymous, or they hid themselves under naked initials, by which means the owners have sometimes lost their own property. It seems a paradox that writers should take such great pains to defraud themselves of their claims.

This coyness of publication was prevalent among our earliest writers, when writing and publishing were not yet almost synonymous terms. Before we had "authors

by profession," we had authors who wrote, and seemed to avoid every sort of publicity. To the secluded writers of that day, the press was arrayed with terrors which have ceased to haunt those who are familiar with its daily labours, and our primeval writers trembled before that halo of immortality, which seemed to hang over that ponderous machinery. Writers eagerly affixed their names to polemical tracts, or to devotional effusions, during the melancholy reigns of EDWARD the Sixth, and MARY, as a record of their zeal, and sometimes as an evidence of their voluntary martyrdom; but the productions of imagination and genius were yet rare and private. The noble-minded hardly ventured out of the halcyon state of manuscript to be tossed about in open sea; it would have been compromising their dignity, or disturbing their repose, to submit themselves to the cavils of the Cynics, for even at this early period of printed books we find that the ancient family of the *Malevoli*, whom Terence has noticed, had survived the fall of Rome, and here did not find their "occupation gone." With many scholars too, it was still doubtful whether the vernacular muses in verse and prose were not trivial and homely. In the inchoate state of our literature, some who were imbued with classical studies might have felt their misgivings, in looking over their "gorgeous inventions," or their "pretty

devices," as betraying undisciplined strength, bewildering fancies, and unformed tastes. They were not aware, even at that more advanced period, when a series of "poetical collections" appeared, of what they had already done; and it has been recently discovered, that when the printer of "England's Helicon" had innocently affixed the names of some writers to their pieces, to quiet their alarms, he was driven to the clumsy expedient of pasting slips of paper over their names. This was a spell which Time only dissolved, that great revealer of secrets more deeply concealed.

When publication appeared thus terrible, an art which was not yet valued even the artists themselves would slight. We have a striking instance of this feeling in the circumstance of a sonnet of our Maiden Queen, on the conspiracies then hatching by the party of her royal sister of Scotland. One of the ladies of her bedchamber had surreptitiously transcribed the poem from her majesty's tablet; and the innocent criminal had thereby cast herself into extreme peril. The Queen affected, or at least expressed, her royal anger lest the people should imagine that she was busied in "such toys," and her majesty was fearful of being considered too lightly of, for so doing. The grave sonnet might, however, have been accepted as a state-paper. The solemn theme, the grandeur of the

queenly personages, and the fortunes of two great nations at issue, communicated to these verses the profound emotions of contemplative royalty, more exquisite than the poetry. Yet Elizabeth could be checked by "the fear to be held too lightly by such toys."

The same motive had influenced some of the great personages in our literature, who, by the suppression of their names, anxiously eluded public observation, at the very moment they were in reality courting it! *Ignoto* and *Immerito*, or bare initials, were the concealing signatures of Rawleigh, of Sidney, and of Spenser. The works of the Earl of Surrey, then the finest poems in the language, were posthumous. "The Arcadia" of Sidney possibly was never intended for the press. The noble Sackville, who planned the grand poem of "The Mirror of Magistrates," willingly left his lofty "Induction" anonymous among the crowd. In the first poetical miscellany in our language collected by the printer Tottell, are "The poems of *uncertain authors*;" so careless were the writers themselves to preserve their names, and so little aware of having any claims on posterity. Some years after, when those other poetical collections, "The Paradise of Dainty Devices" and "England's Helicon," were projected by their publishers, they were borrowed or stolen from manuscripts which lay neglected with their

authors, and who for the most part conceal themselves under quaint signatures.

The metropolis, in the days of Elizabeth and James, bore a pretty close resemblance to those ancient cities now existing before us on the Continent, famous in their day, but which, from causes not here necessary to specify, have not grown with the growth of time. Cologne, Coblentz, and Mayence, are such cities; and the city of Rouen, in its more ancient site, exhibits a picture of the streets of London in the days of Shakespeare. Stationary in their limits and their population, the classes of society are more distinctly marked out, but the individual lives more constantly under the survey of his neighbours. Their art of living is to live in the public eye; to keep up appearances, however this pride may prove inconvenient. No one would seem to have an established household, or always care to indicate its locality; their meals are at a public table, and their familiar acquaintance are found in the same public resorts; their social life becomes contracted as their own ancient narrow streets.

Such was London, when the Strand was a suburb, with only a few scattered mansions; the present streets still retain the family names, thus separating London from its regal sister. The glory of the goldsmiths and the mercers blazed in Cheapside, "the

beauty of London;" and Fleet Street was the Bond Street of fashionable loungers. In this contracted sphere, where all moved, and the observers had microscopical eyes, any trivial novelty was strangely magnified, and the great personage was an object for their scrutiny as well as the least considerable. Thus we find that the Lord Chancellor Bacon is censured by one of the gossiping pens of that day for his inordinate pride and pomp on the most ordinary occasions. He went in his state robes "to cheapen and buy silks and velvets at Sir Baptist Hicker's and Burner's shops." James the First, I think, once in Parliament alluded to the "goldsmiths at Cheap, who showed not the bravery of former days," as a mark of the decline of national prosperity. One of the popular alarms of that day was "the rising of the apprentices," whenever the City's clumsy "watch and ward" were put to the rout; the apprentices usually made an attempt on their abhorrence, Bridewell, or pulled down two or three houses on Shrove Tuesday. Once, on the trying of some ordnance in Moorfields, the court was seized by a panic of "a rising in the City." From all this we may form some notion of the size of the metropolis, and its imbecile police. In a vast and flourishing metropolis the individual in liberty and security passes among the countless waves of this ocean of men.

A metropolis thus rising from its contracted infancy, extending in growth, and diversified by new classes of society, presented many novelties in its crowded scenes; mutable manners, humorous personages, all the affectations or the homeliness of its citizens. Many writers, among whom were some of admirable genius, devoted their pens to fugitive objects and evanescent scenes, sure of finding an immediate reception from the sympathy of their readers. New modes of life, and altered manners during a lengthened peace, brought men into closer observation of each other; the ranks in society were no longer insulated; their haunts were the same localities, the playhouse, the ordinary, and Paul's Walk. There we find the gay and the grave—the disbanded captain—the critic from the inns of court—fantastic "fashion-mongers"—the coney-catcher who watches "the warren,"—and the gull, "town or country," a term which, unlike that of "the coney-catcher," has survived the times before us, and is imbedded in the language *. They even touched on the verge of that

* This technical term, designating the class of youthful loungers, was a new term in 1596, when Sir John Davis wrote his "Epigrams"—

"Oft in my laughing rimes I name A GULL,
But this *new terme* will many questions breed;
Therefore, at first, I will expresse at full
Who is a true and perfect Gull indeed."

His delineation is admirable; Gifford, in his "Jonson," quotes

last refinement in society, critical coteries. We learn from Jonson, that there was "a college of critics," where a new member, "if he could pay for their suppers," might abuse the works of any man, and purchase for himself "the terrible name of a critic;" and ladies "lived free from their husbands," held coteries, and "gave entertainments to all the wits." This was the incipient state of the new world of manners, and what we now call "society;" and society provokes satire!

It was at the close of the Elizabethan period that our first town-satirists arose, from whom we learn the complicate system of manners, in the artifices practised in society; and in looking on their phantasmagorias, we are often startled among their grotesque forms by discovering our own exact faces. Satires on manners, descriptive of the lighter follies and the more involved artifices of social life, could hitherto have had no scope. The great in station alone constituted what may be considered as society, without any of those marking differences resulting from the inequalities of fortune. Satire then, as with Skelton, was an invective discharged at some potent individual at the risk of life;

it at length,—i. 14. But whoever may be curious about these masculine "birds" will be initiated into the mysteries of "Gullery" by "The Gulls' Horn-book" of DEKKER, of which we have a beautiful edition, with appropriate embellishments, by Dr. Nott.

or it was an attack on a whole body, as Piers Ploughman's on the clergy of the times, while Will, or John, or Piers, whatever was his name, hid himself behind a hedge on Malvern Hills. Society, in the modern acceptation, of a miscellaneous mixture, which equalises men even in their inequality, supplying passing objects for raillery or indignation, opened that wider stage, which a growing metropolis only could exhibit. We must become intimate with men to sound even the depths of superficial follies, and declamation may even fall short in the conception of some enormous criminal. Society must have considerably advanced before a town-satirist could appear.

The change in style was not less remarkable than that in manners. Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, after the wild luxuriance of fancy which had everywhere covered the fresh soil of the public mind, in the riot of our genius, a great change was occurring in the minds of our writers. Nature, in her open paths of sunshine, no longer busied them, while they stole into the bye-corners of abstract ideas, and roved after glittering conceits. Philosophy introduced itself into poetry, and wit became the substitute for passion. It was then that Sir John Davies wrote his "Immortality of the Soul," which still remains a model of didactic verse; and Donne, "The Progress of the

Soul," a progress which he did not venture to conclude —a poem the most creative and eccentric in the language, but which must be reserved for the few. Donne, who closed his life as a St. Austin, had opened it as a Catullus.

The depth of sentiment was contracted into sententious epigrams, alike in prose and verse; and in the display of their ingenuity, the remotest objects were brought into collision, and the most differing things into a strange coherence, to startle by surprises, and to make us admire these wonders by their novelty. They cast about them their pointed antitheses, and often subsided into a clink of similar syllables, and the clench of an ambiguous word.

In all matters they affected curt phrases; and it has been observed that even the colloquial style was barbarously elliptical. They spoke gruff and short, affecting brevity of words, which was probably held to be epigrammatic. It became fashionable to write what they entitled books of "Epigrams" and books of "Characters." They appear to have taken their notion of an epigram from the Greek Anthology, where the term was confined to any inscription for a statue or a tomb, or any object to be commemorated. Modern literature, in adopting the term, has applied it to a different purpose from its original signification. An epigram now is a

short satire closing with a point of wit. Wit, in our present sense, was yet unpractised, and the modern epigram was not yet discovered. Ben Jonson has composed books of epigrams; but, though he has censured Sir John Harrington's as not being epigrams, but mere narratives, has written himself in the prevalent style of his day. They are short poems on persons, and on incidents in his own life, which he poured out to relieve his own feelings when they were outraged, and, so far, they are a reflection of the poet's state of mind—the autobiography of his potent intellect. As among these epigrammatists we never had a Martial, so among these character-writers we could hardly expect a La Bruyère for his refined causticity; but the most skilful, as Sir Thomas Overbury and Bishop Earle, are so witty as to seem grotesque, but it is human nature disguised in the fashions of the day*.

This infection of style must have come from a higher source than a mere fashionable affectation of the day, for it endured through half a century. The axiomatic style of Bacon in his "Essaies," which first appeared in 1597, probably set the model of the curt period for these Senecas in prose and verse, who found no difficulty

* Dr. Bliss has given an excellent edition of Bishop Earle's "Microcosmography, or A Piece of the World Discovered in Essays and Characters."

in putting together short sentences, without, however, having discovered the art of short thoughts.

This change in style is considered as characteristic of the age of James, but it began before his reign. The age of this monarch has been universally condemned as the age of pedantry, and of quibbles and conceits, all which, indeed, have been liberally ascribed to his taste; but in the plentiful evidence of his wit and humour, it would be difficult to find an instance of these bastard ornaments of style.

In the history of literature the names of sovereigns usually only serve to mark its dates; and an "author-sovereign," to use Lord Shaftesbury's emphatic expression, can exercise no prerogative, and yields even his precedence. In more than one respect JAMES THE FIRST may form an exception, for the barren list of his writings alone might serve to indicate the age; their subjects were not so peculiar to this monarch's taste as they were common with higher geniuses than his majesty.

When, on the throne of England, it was deemed advisable to collect his majesty's writings, the honour of the editorship was conferred on Montague, Bishop of Winton, whom Fuller has characterised as "a potent courtier;" and the courtly potency of the prelatical editor effuses itself before the "majesty of kings" in the most awful of all prefaces.

Cavillers there were, who, on distinct principles, objected to a king being a writer of books, carrying on war "by the pen instead of the pike, and spending his passion on paper instead of powder." This was a military cry from those whose "occupation had long gone." Others, more critically nice, assumed that, "since writing of books had grown into a trade, it was as discreditable for a king to become an author as it would be for him to be a practitioner in a profession." Such objectors were not difficult to put down, and the bishop has furnished an ample catalogue of "royal authors" among all great nations; and, in our own, from Alfred to Elizabeth. The royal family of James were particularly distinguished for their literary acquirements. As that was the day when no argument could be urged without standing by the side of some authority, the bishop had done well, and no scholar in an upper class could have done better; but this bishop was imprudent, his restless courtliness fatigued his pen till he found a *divine origin of king-writing!* "The majesty of kings," he asserts, "is not unsuited to a writer of books;" and proceeds—"*The first royal author* is the King of Kings—God himself, who doth so many things for our imitation. It pleased his divine wisdom to be *the first in this rank*, that we read of, that did *ever write*. He wrote on the tables

on both sides, which was the work of God." This was in the miserable strain of those unnatural thoughts and remote analogies which were long to disfigure the compositions even of our scholars. How James and the bishop looked on one another at their first meeting, after this preface was fairly read, one would like to learn; but here we have the age!

One work by this royal author must not pass away with the others; it is not only stamped with the idiosyncracy of the author, but it is one of those original effusions which are precious to the history of man. "THE BASILICON DORON, or His Majesty's Instructions to His Dearest Son Henry the Prince," is a genuine composition in the vernacular idiom; not the prescribed labour of a secretary, nor the artificial composition of the salaried literary man, but warm with the personal emotions of the royal author. He writes for the Prince of Scotland, and about the Scottish people; he instructs the prince even by his own errors and misfortunes. Some might be surprised to find the king strenuously warning the prince against pedantry; exhorting his pupil to avoid what he calls any "corrupt leide, as book-language and pen-and-ink terms;" counselling him *to write in his own language*, "for it best becometh a king to purify and make famous his own tongue." To have ventured on so

complete an emancipation from the prevalent prejudices, in the creation of a vernacular literature, is one evidence, among many, that this royal author was not a mere pedant; and the truth is, that his writings on popular subjects are colloquially unostentatious; abstaining from those oratorical periods and rhetorical fancies which the scholar indulged in his speeches and proclamations—the more solemn labours of his own hand.

It is due to the literary character of James the First to notice his prompt sympathies with the productions of genius. This monarch had not exceeded his twentieth year when we find him in an intercourse with men of letters and science at home and abroad. The death of Sidney called forth an elegiac poem, and the works of the astronomer Tycho Brahe are adorned by a poetical tribute from the royal hand; during the winter the king passed in Denmark he was a frequent visiter of the philosopher, on whom he conferred an honour and a privilege. That he addressed a letter to Shakespeare, grateful for the compliments received in "Macbeth," there is little reason to doubt; for Davenant, the possessor of the letter, which was finally lost, told it to the Duke of Buckingham; few traditions are so clearly traced to their source; and indeed some mark of James's attention to Shakespeare is posi-

tively told by Ben Jonson in his Elegy on "The Swan of Avon"—

> ——"What a sight it were,
> To see thee on our waters yet appear;
> And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
> That so did take Eliza and OUR JAMES*!"

Hooker was the favourite vernacular author of James; and his earliest inquiry, on his arrival in England, was after Hooker, whose death he deeply regretted. James wrote a congratulatory letter to Lord Bacon on his great work; the king at least bowed to the genius of the man. It was by the especial command of this royal "pedant," twenty-four years after the publication of Fairfax's "Tasso," that a second edition revived that version; and he provided Herbert, the poet, with a sinecure or pension, that his muse might cease to be disturbed. James the First was not only the patron of Ben Jonson, but admitted the bard to a literary intercourse; and it is probable that we owe to those conferences some of the splendour of the Masques, and in which there are many strokes of the familiar acquaintance of the poet with his royal admirer. More grave and important objects sometimes engaged his attention.

* Every atom of candour is to be grudged to this hapless monarch; it is lamentable to see such a writer as Mr. Hallam prompt instantly to confirm a mere suggestion of Mr. Collier, that James could never have written a letter to Shakespeare, incapacitated to sympathise with the genial effusions of our poet.

It was James the First who assigned to the learned Usher the task of unfolding the antiquities of the British churches; and it was under the protection of this monarch that Father Paul composed the famous history, which, as fast as it was written, was despatched to England by our ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton; and, in this country, this great history was first published. These are not the only testimonies of his strong affection for literature and literary men; but they may surprise some who only hear of a pedant-king, who in reality was only a "learned" one.

THE AGE OF DOCTRINES.

We now leave the age of Imagination for the age of Doctrines; we have entered into another reign; and a new epoch arises in our Literature, our tastes, and our manners.

We turn from the noble wrestlings of power, the stirrings of adventure, and the commanding genius of the Maiden Queen, to the uninterrupted level of a long protracted tranquillity; a fat soil, where all flourished to the eye, while it grew into rankness, and an atmosphere of corruption, breeding, in its unnatural heat, clouds of insects. A monarch arrived in the flush of new dominion with a small people, who, as an honest soul among them said, "having been forty years in the desert, were rushing to take possession of the promised land." All was to be the festival of an unbroken repose—a court of shows and sports, the rejoicings of three kingdoms.

But the Queen, with these dominions, had bequeathed her successor two troublesome legacies, in two redoubtable portions of the English public; both the Romanists, and those numerous dissenters, emphatically called Puritans, were looking up to the new monarch, while

the "true protestants of Elizabeth" closed not their eyes in watchfulness over both papist and presbyter.

To the monarch from the Kirk of Scotland, which he had extolled for "the sincerest Kirk in the world," as suited a Scottish sovereign, and who had once glanced with a presbyter's eye on "an evil mass in England," the English bishops hastened to offer the loyalty of their church. His more ancient acquaintance, the puritans, were not behind the bishops, nor without hope, to settle what they held to be "the purity" of church discipline; but James had drunk large draughts of a Scottish presbytery, and knew what lay at the bottom—he had tasted the dregs. He did not like the puritans, and he told them why; to unking and to unbishop was "the parity" of their petty model of Geneva. The new monarch declared, perhaps he would not otherwise have been received, that "he came to maintain what the Queen had established," — he demanded from the puritans, conformity to the State, and probably little imagined that they preferred martyrdom. James lived to see the day when silencing, ejecting, and expatiating, ended in no other conformity than the common sufferings of the party *.

The claims of the Romanist were more tender than

* James granted to the Puritans the public discussion then prayed for—the famous conference at Hampton Court.

those of the sons of John Knox, they prayed only for a toleration. The monarch delayed what he dared not concede. He is charged by the non-conformist with being "very charitable" to these votaries of an indefeasible right of monarchy, and his project of "meeting them half-way" startled the English protestant. What does the king mean? Are our doctrines the same? are we to return to the confessional? purchase plenary pardons? require absolution and the salvation of souls from the bishop of Rome?

The main objection of the king himself to what he styled "the corruption of the mother-church," was the papal supremacy, and its pretended power of deposing monarchs, or of granting a dispensation for their murder. Here the popular patriot exclaimed, "Was the great revolution of civil liberty made only for the prince's safety?" Whatever might be this reverie of a coalition with Rome, Rome for ever baffled, by the never-ceasing principle of her one and indivisible divine autocracy. "The celestial court," omnipotent and omniscient, hurled its bolt at the pacific heretic of England. It menaced his title, while its priests busily inculcated that "anything may be done against heretics, because they are worse than Turks and infidels;" then barrels of gunpowder were placed under his throne, and the papal breves equally shook his

dominion by absolving the Romanists of England from their oath of allegiance. The English monarch chose to be the advocate of his own cause, to vindicate his regal rights, and to protest before all Europe against this monstrous usurpation. He wrote "The Apology for the Oath of Allegiance," and we must concede to his tract this merit, that if the cause were small, boundless and enduring was the effect. In every country in Europe, through all the ranks of the learned, and for many a year, this effusion of James occupied the pens alike of the advocates of the apostolical court, and of the promulgators of the emancipation of mankind*; nor is it remotely connected with the noble genius of Paul Sarpi, whose great work was first published in London, and patronised by the English monarch.

It was on a nation divided into unequal parties of irreconcileable opinions that James conferred the dubious blessing of a long peace; for twenty years there were no wars but the battle of pens, and the long artillery of a hundred volumes.

Polemical studies become political when the heads of parties mask themselves under some particular doctrine. Opinion only can neutralise opinion; but in the age of doctrines before us, authority was considered stronger

* A curious list of some of the more remarkable controversialists on both sides may be found in Irving's "Lives of the Scottish Poets," ii. 234.

than opinion, and in their unsettled notions and contested principles, each party seemed to itself impregnable. Every Æneas brandished his weapon, but could never wound the flitting chimeras. It was in the spirit of the age that Dr. Sutcliffe, the Dean of Exeter, laid the foundations of a college for controversies or disputations at Chelsea, on the banks of the quiet Thames. In this institution the provost and the fellows were unceasingly to answer the Romanist and the Mar-Prelate. The fervent dean scraped together all his properties in many an odd shape to endow it, obtained a charter, and obscured his own name by calling it "King James' College." He lived to see a small building begun, but which, like the controversies, was not to be finished. A college for controversy verily required inexhaustible funds. When the day arrived that those became the masters whom these dogmatists had so constantly refuted, the controversial college was oddly changed into a manufactory of leather-guns, which probably were not more efficacious.

James ascended the English throne as a poor man comes to a large inheritance. In securing peace he deemed he had granted the people all they desired, and he was the only monarch who cast a generous thought on their social recreations. That image of peace and of delight was to be reflected in the court; and in that

enchanted circle of flattery and of hope, the silvery voices of his silken parasites told how "he gave like a king;" but he himself, a man of simple habits, with an utter carelessness of money, learned a lesson which he never rightly comprehended, how an exchequer might be voided.

James was a polemical monarch when polemics were political. But what creed or system did this royal polemic wholly adopt? Born of Roman Catholic parents and not abhorrent to the mother-church; for the childhood of antiquity had its charms for him; brought up among the Scottish presbyterians, with whom he served a long accommodating apprenticeship of royalty, and with the doctrines of the Anglican Church become the sovereign of three realms, did James, like his brother of France, modify his creed, for a crown, by the state-religion?

Behold this luckless philosopher on the throne closing the last accompts of his royalty with nothing but zeros in his own favour. By puritans hated, by Romanists misliked, and surrounded by trains of the "blue bonnets," who were acted on the stage, and balladed in the streets; little gracious with his English subjects, to whom from the first "the coming-in" seemed as much like an invasion as an accession; never forgiven by the foreigner for his insular genius, whose

pacific policy refused to enter into a project of visionary conquest; and finally falling into a new age, when the monarch, reduced to a mere metaphysical abstraction, whose prerogative and privilege were alike indefinite, had to wrestle with "the five hundred kings," as James once called the Commons; deservedly or undeservedly, this monarch for all parties was a convenient subject for panegyric or for libel, true or false.

But in reality what was the character of James the First? Where shall we find it*?

* I have at least honestly attempted "An Inquiry into the Literary and Political Character of James the First;"—"Miscellanies of Literature."

PAMPHLETS.

PAMPHLETS, those leaves of the hour, and volumes of a season and even of a week, slight and evanescent things as they appear, and scorned at by opposite parties while each cherishes their own, are in truth the records of the public mind, the secret history of a people which does not always appear in the more open narrative; the true bent and temper of the times, the contending interests, the appeal of a party, or the voice of the nation, are nowhere so vividly brought before us as by these advocates of their own cause, too deeply interested to disguise their designs, and too contracted in their space to omit their essential points.

Of all the nations of Europe our country first offered a rapid succession of these busy records of men's thoughts, their contending interests, their mightier passions, their aspirations, and sometimes even their follies. Wherever pamphlets abound there is freedom, and therefore have we been a nation of pamphleteers. Even at the time when the press was not yet free, an invincible pamphlet struck a terror; the establishment of the Anglican Church under Elizabeth disturbed the little synagogue of puritans, and provoked the fury of

the Mar-Prelate pamphlets; the pacific reign of James covered the land with a new harvest of agricultural pamphlets; but when we entered on an age when men thought what they listed, and wrote what they thought, pamphlets ran through the land, and then the philosophical speculator on human affairs read what had never before been written; the troubles of Charles the First and the nation sounded the trumpet of civil war by the blast of pamphlets; state-plots and state-cabals were hatched at least by the press, under the second Charles, and popery and arbitrary government terrified the nation by their pamphlets; the principles of English government and toleration expanded in the pamphlets of the reign of William the Third, even Locke's Treatises on Toleration and on Government were at first but pamphlets; and under Anne the nation observed the light skirmishes of Whig and Tory pamphlets.

Our neighbours in their great revolutionary agitation, if they could not comprehend our constitution, imitated our arts of insurgency, and from the same impulses at length rivalled us; but the very term of pamphlet is English; and the practice seemed to them so novel, that a recent French biographer designates an early period of the French revolution as one when "the art of PAMPHLETS had not yet reached perfection."

The history of pamphlets would form an extraordinary history; but whoever gathers a history from pamphlets must prepare for contradiction. Rushworth had formed a great collection to supply the materials of his volumes, but speaks slightly of them, while insinuating his own sagacity in separating truth from falsehood; but he concluded "very suspiciously," observed Oldys, that none need trouble themselves with any further examination than what he had been pleased to make. This suspicion was more manifest when Nalson began another collection from pamphlets to shake the evidence of the pamphlets of Rushworth. Each had found what he craved for; for whoever will look only into those on his favourite side, finds enough written with his own passions, but he will obtain little extension of knowledge, for this is much like looking at his own face in a glass.

But we must not consider pamphlets wholly in a political view; their circuit is boundless, holding all the world of man; they enter into every object of human interest. The silent revolutions in manners, language, habits, are there to be traced; the interest which was taken on novel objects of discovery would be wholly lost were it not for these records; and, indeed, it is the multiplicity of pamphlets on a particular topic or object which appear at a particular

period, that offers the truest picture of public opinion.

Those who would not dare to compose a volume have fluttered in the leaves of a pamphlet. Three or four ideas are a good stock to set up a pamphlet, and look well in it, as picked wares in a shop-window. The mute who cannot speak at a dinner or on the hustings, is eloquent in a pamphlet; and he who speaks only to excite the murmurs of his auditors, amply vindicates himself by a pamphlet. I doubt whether there is a single important subject to which some English pamphlet may not form a necessary supplement. Many eminent in rank, or who, from their position, have never written anything else, have written a pamphlet; and as the motive must be urgent which induces any such to have recourse to their pen, so the matter is of deeper interest; and it has often happened that the public have thence derived information which else had not reached them. The heads of parties have sometimes issued these manifestoes; and the tails, in the form of a pamphlet, have sometimes let out secrets for which they have been reprimanded.

Some of the most original conceptions, whose very errors or peculiarities even may instruct, lie hidden in pamphlets. These effusions of a more permanent nature than those of politics, are usually literary,

scientific, or artistical, the spontaneous productions of amateurs, the precious suggestions, and sometimes the original discoveries, of taste or enthusiasm. These are the *deliciæ* of the amenities of literature; and such pamphlets have often escaped our notice, since their writers were not authors, and had no works of their own among which to shelter them.

The age of Charles the First may be characterised as the age of pamphlets. Of that remarkable period, we possess an extraordinary collection, which amounts to about thirty thousand pieces, uniformly bound in two thousand volumes of various sizes, accompanied by twelve folio volumes of the catalogue chronologically arranged, exhibiting their full titles. Even the date of the day is noted when each pamphlet was published. It includes a hundred in manuscript written on the king's side, which at the time were not allowed to be printed. The formation of this collection is a romantic incident in the annals of Bibliography.

In that critical year, 1640, a bookseller of the name of Thomason conceived the idea of preserving, in that new age of contested principles, an unbroken chain of men's arguments, and men's doings. We may suppose that this collector, commencing with the year 1640, and continuing without omission or interruption to the year 1660, could not at first have imagined the

vast career he had to run; there was, perhaps, sagacity in the first thought, but there was far more intrepidity in never relinquishing this favourite object during these perilous twenty years, amid a conflict of costly expenditure, of personal danger, and almost insurmountable difficulties.

The design was carried on in secrecy through confidential servants, who at first buried the volumes as they collected them; but they soon became too numerous for such a mode of concealment. The owner, dreading that the ruling government would seize on the collection, watched the movements of the army of the Commonwealth, and carried this itinerant library in every opposite direction. Many were its removals, northward or westward, but the danger became so great, and the collection so bulky, that he had at one time an intention to pass them over into Holland, but feared to trust his treasure to the waves. He at length determined to place them in his warehouses, in the form of tables round the room, covered with canvas. It is evident that the loyalty of the man had rendered him a suspected person; for he was once dragged from his bed, and imprisoned for seven weeks, during which time, however, the collection suffered no interruption, nor was the secret betrayed.

The secret was, however, evidently not unknown to

some faithful servants of the king; for when, in 1647, his majesty at Hampton Court desired to see a particular pamphlet, it was obtained for him from this collection, though the collector was somewhat chary of the loan, fearing the loss of what he felt as a limb of his body, not probably recoverable. The king had the volume with him in his flight towards the Isle of Wight; but it was returned to the owner, with his majesty's earnest exhortation, that he should diligently continue the collection. A slight accident which happened to the volume occasioned the collector to leave this interesting incident on record*.

* In vol. 100, small quarto, we find the following memorandum:—

"Mem'dum that Col[l] Will Legg and Mr. Arthur Treavor were employed by his majes[e] K. Ch. to gett for his present use a pamphl[t] which his majestie had then occasion to make use of, & not meeting with it they both come to me having heard that I did employ myself to rake up all such things from the beginning of that Parliament, and finding it with me told me it was for his majestys own use. I told them all I had were at his maj[y] command and service, & withal told them if I should part with it & loose it—presuming that when his majestie had done with it, that little account would be made of it, and that if I should loose it, by that loss a limb of my collection, which I should be very loth to see, well knowing it would be impossible to supplie it if it should happen to be lost, with which answer they returned to his majes[e] at Hampton C[t] (as I take it) & tould him they had found the person which had it, & withal how loath he that had it was to part with it, he much fearing its loss. Whereupon they came to me again from his maj[e] to tell me that upon the word of a king (to use the king's own expressions) they would safely return it, whereupon imme-

When Cromwell ruled, a place of greater security was sought for than the owner's warehouses: a fictitious sale was made to the University of Oxford, who would be more able to struggle for their preservation than a private individual, if the Protector discovered and claimed these distracted documents of the history of his own times.

Mr. Thomason lived to complete his design; he witnessed the restoration, and died in 1666, leaving his important collection, which was still lodged at Oxford, and which he describes in his will "as not to be paralleled," in trust to be sold for the benefit of his children. His will affords an evidence that he was a person of

diately by them I sent it to his majestie. Who having done with it & having it with him when he was going towards the Isle of Wight, let it fall in the *durt*, and then calling for the two persons (who attended him) delivered it to them with a charge as they would answer it another day, that they should both speedily & safely return it to him from whom they had received it, and withal to desire the party to go on & continue what had begun. Which book together with his majtie⁸ signification to me, by these worthy and faithful gents. I received both speedily and safely. My volume hath that mark of honour which no other volume in my collection hath, & v^r diligently and carefully I continued the same until that most hapie restoration & coronation of his most gratious majestie King Charle y^e 2d, whom God long preserve.

"GEO THOMASON."

The volume bears the "honours" of its mischance. There are a great number of stains on the edges of the leaves—some more than an inch in depth. The accident must have happened on the road in the king's flight, from the marks of the mud.

warm patriotic feelings, with a singular turn of mind, for he left a stipend of forty shillings for two sermons to be annually preached, one of which was to commemorate the destruction of the Armada.

The collection continued at Oxford many years awaiting a purchaser*; and at length appears to have been bought by Mearne, "the king's stationer," at the command of the secretary of state for Charles the Second; but Charles, who would little value old pamphlets, and more particularly these, which only reminded him of such mortifying occurrences, by an order in council in 1684 munificently allowed the widow of Mearne to dispose of them as well as she could. In 1709 we find them offered to Lord Weymouth†, and in 1732 they were still undisposed of; but in those times of loyal rebellion, either for the assumption or the restoration of the throne, that of the

* In 1676, Dr. Barlow, one of the trustees, writes to the Rev. George Thomason, who was a Fellow of Queen's College and the eldest son of the collector, respecting the collection and its value. The letter is printed in Beloe's "Anecdotes of Literature," vol. ii.

† A letter from Dr. Jenkin, who was chaplain to Lord Weymouth, to Mr. Baker, Dec. 3, 1709:—"There is another rarity then to be sold, which is proffered to my lord—a Collection of Pamphlets, in number 30,000, bound in 2000 vols. The collection was begun by Charles 1st in 1640, and continued to 1660. In a printed paper, where I saw this account, it is said the collectors refused 4000*l.* for them."—*Masters' Life of Rev. Thomas Baker*, p. 28.

Commonwealth excited so little interest, that this extraordinary collection was so depreciated, that Oldys then considered it would not reach the twentieth part of the four thousand pounds which it was said that the collector had once refused for it*. In 1745 a representative of the Mearne family still held the volumes†, and eventually they were purchased at the small price of three or four hundred pounds by George the Third, and by him were presented to the national

* "Phœnix Britannicus,"—"Oldys' Dissertation upon Pamphlets," p. 556. Oldys drew up an account of these pamphlets from "The Memoirs of the Curious," published in 1701. He says, that the Collection was made by *Tomlinson, the bookseller*, and the Catalogue by Marmaduke Foster, the auctioneer; and relates a traditional story, that it is reported that Charles the First gave ten pounds for reading one of these pamphlets, at the owner's house in St. Paul's Churchyard. This collection was not commenced until Nov. 1640, and the king left London in Jan. 1642; during this time the collection could not be very numerous, nor would there be that difficulty in seeing a pamphlet as at the subsequent more distracted period. It is curious to trace the origin of traditionary tales; they often stand on a ricketty foundation. We find that the king did borrow a pamphlet, but at a time when he could not hasten to St. Paul's Churchyard to read it; we may presume that the bookseller did not charge his majesty so disloyal a price as ten pounds for the perusal of a single pamphlet; he probably received only the king's approbation of his design, which doubtless was no slight stimulus to its completion.

† A Mr. Sisson, a druggist in Ludgate-street, who died in 1749; they then became the property of his relative, Miss Sisson, who seems gladly to have disburdened herself of this domestic grievance in 1761.—*Hollis' Memoirs*, p. 121.

library, where they now bear the name of the King's Pamphlets.

Thus having escaped from seizure and dispersion, this noble collection remained in the hands of those who priced it as a valueless incumbrance, and yet seem to have respected the object of the enterprise, for they preserved it entire. It may be some consolation to such intrepid collectors that their intelligence and their fervour are not in vain, and however they may fail in the attainment of their motive, a great end may fortunately be achieved.

THE OCEANA OF HARRINGTON.

THE hardy paradoxes, not wholly without foundation, and the humiliating truths so mortifying to human nature, of the mighty "Leviathan," whose author was little disposed to flatter or to elevate his brothers*, were opposed by an ideal government, more generous in its sympathies, and less obtrusive of brute force, or "the public sword," in the OCEANA of JAMES HARRINGTON.

Free from mere party motives of the Monarchist or the Commonwealth-man, for he gratified neither, Harrington was the greatest of political theorists; and his "political architecture," with all his "models of government, notional and practicable," still remains for us, and has not been overlooked by some framers of constitutions.

The psychological history of HARRINGTON combines with his works. His was a thoughtful youth, like that of Sidney, of Milton, and Gray, which never needed correction, but rather kept those around him in awe.

* I must refer the reader for the development of the system of Hobbes to "MISCELLANIES OF LITERATURE," p. 261, 1840.

Among the usual studies of his age, it was an enterprise to have acquired the modern languages, as entering into an extensive plan of foreign travel, which the boy had already decided on. The death of his father before his legal age enabled him to realise this project. Political studies, however, had not yet occurred to him; and when he left England, he "knew no more of monarchy, anarchy, aristocracy, and democracy or oligarchy, than as hard words for which he was obliged to look into the dictionary."

In Holland, he first contemplated on the image of popular liberty, recent from the yoke of Spain; it was a young people rejoicing in the holiday of freedom. There he found a friend in the fugitive Queen of Bohemia: his uncle, Lord Harrington, had been the governor of that spirited princess. He passed over into Denmark with the crownless elector, soliciting for that aid which no political prudence could afford. He resisted the seductions of those noble friendships in pursuit of his great plan. He entered France, he loitered in Germany, and at length advanced into Italy. At Rome, he refused to bestow on his holiness the prostrate salutation, and when some Englishmen complained of their compatriot's stiffness to Charles the First, who reminded the young philosopher that he might have performed a courteous custom as to a tem-

poral prince, the reply was happy,—"having kissed his majesty's hand, he would always hold it beneath him to kiss any prince's toe."

Our future political theorist was deeply struck in his admiration of the aristocratic government of Venice, which he conceived to be the most perfect and durable government hitherto planned by the wit of man. Such was the prevalent notion throughout Europe concerning a government existing in secrecy and mystery! In Italy, he found Politics, Literature and Art, and provided himself with a rich store of Italian books, especially on political topics. Machiavelli with him was "the prince of Politicians;" but he has opened his great work with the name of another Italian, "Janotti (Giannotti), the most excellent describer of the Commonwealth of Venice." Giannotti is a name which, though it has not shared the celebrity of Machiavelli, seems to have been that of a more practical politician, for Giannotti at length obtained that honourable secretaryship of Florence, the loss of which, it is said, so deeply mortified the lofty spirit of his greater rival, that the illustrious ex-secretary died of grief, which his philosophy should have quieted.

Harrington returned home an accomplished cavalier; but the commonwealth of Holland, the aristocracy of Venice, the absolute monarchy of France, imperial

Germany, and what else he had contemplated in the northern courts, must have furnished to his thoughtful mind the elements of his theory of politics.

He returned home to the privacy of his studies, refusing any public employment; but that he kept up an intercourse with the court, appears by his personal acquaintance with the king. Many years form a blank in his life; once indeed he had made an ineffectual attempt to enter parliament, but failed, though his sentiments were well known in favour of popular government. It is probable, that in that unhappy period, when persons and events were alike of so mixed and ambiguous a character, our philosopher could not sympathise with the clash of temporary passions.

When the king was to be conveyed from Newcastle in 1646, Harrington was chosen to attend his person as "a gentleman well known to the king before, and who had never engaged with any party whatever." He was then in his thirty-fifth year.

This appointment of Harrington was agreeable to the king. Charles found in Harrington the character he well knew to appreciate. He conversed on books, and pictures, and foreign affairs, and found a ripe scholar, a travelled mind, and a genius overflowing with strange speculative notions. Their conversations

were free; Harrington did not conceal his predilection for commonwealth institutions, at which the king was impatient. Neither could bring the other to his own side, for each was fixed in taking opposite views; the one looking to the advantages of monarchy, and the other to those of a republic. The only subject they could differ on, never interrupted their affections; the theoretical commonwealth-man, and the practical monarch, in their daily intercourse, found that they had a heart for each other.

In Charles the First, Harrington discovered a personage unlike the distorted image which political passions had long held out. In adversity the softened prince seemed only to be "the man of sorrows." On one occasion Harrington vindicated the king's conduct, and urged that the royal concessions were satisfactory. This strong personal attachment to Charles alarmed the party in power. Harrington was ordered away. He subsequently visited the king when at St. James's, and was present at the awful act of the decapitation. Charles presented Harrington with a last memorial. Aubrey, who knew Harrington, may tell the rest of his story. "Mr. Harrington was on the scaffold with the king when he was beheaded; and I have ofttimes heard him speak of King Charles the First with the greatest zeal and passion imaginable; and that his death gave

him so great grief, that he contracted a disease by it; that never anything did go so near to him."

The agony of that terrible day afflicted Harrington with a malady from which he was never afterwards freed; a profound melancholy preyed upon his spirits; he withdrew into utter seclusion, not to mourn, but to despond. His friends were alarmed at a hermit's melancholy; some imagined that his affection for the king had deranged his intellect; others ascribed his seclusion to mere discontent with the times.

To rid himself of friendly importunities, and to evince that his mind was not deranged, whatever might be his feelings, he confided to his circle that he had long been occupied in the study of civil government, to invent an art which should prevent the disorders of a state. It was his opinion that "a government is not of so accidental or arbitrary institution as people imagine; for in society there are natural causes producing their necessary effects as well as in the earth or the air." The passionless sage was so discriminately just, that he declared that "our late troubles were not wholly to be ascribed to the misgovernment of the prince, nor to the stubbornness of the people; but to the nature of certain changes which had happened to the nation." He then, for their curious admiration, disclosed the perfect model of a commonwealth in his "OCEANA."

OCEANA, or England, was the model of "a free state;" a political "equality" was its basis; equality to be guarded by a number of devices. Harrington laid the foundation of politics, on the principle that *empire follows the balance of property*, whether lodged in one, in a few, or in many. Toland asserts that this was as noble a discovery as that of the circulation of the blood, of printing, gunpowder, or the compass," or optic glasses; the Newtonian gravity had not then been established, or, doubtless, it had been enumerated.

To preserve the political equality, there were to be "balances" in dominion and in property. An Agrarian law, by its distributions suitable to the rank of the individual, and which were never to be enlarged nor diminished, would prevent any man, or any party, overpowering the people by their possessions. All those states in Europe which were the remains of Gothic dominion, were thrown into internal conflicts by their "overbalances." The overbalance of one man was tyranny; of a few, was oligarchy; of the many, was rebellion, or anarchy *. The perpetual shifting of their

* The masterpiece of legislation of Abbé Sieyes, who, during the French Revolution, had always a new constitution in his pocket, was founded on this principle of "checks and balances in the state," evidently adopted from Harrington. In Scott's "Life of Napoleon," vol. iv., the Abbé Sieyes' system is described.

"balances" had produced all their disturbances. He traced this history in extinct governments, as well as in our own. So refined were his political optics, that he discerned when our kings had broken Magna Charta some thirty times; and during the reign of Charles the First, he asserts that these "balances" had been altered nine times.

The "balance of property" being the foundation of the commonwealth, the superstructure was raised of magistracy. Magistracy was to proceed by "rotation," and to be settled by the "ballot." The senate was to be elected by the purity of suffrage, which was to be found in the balloting-box. And in this rotatory government, the third part of the senate would be wheeled out at their fixed terms. The senate by these self-purgations would renovate its youth; and the sovereign authority, by this unceasing movement, would act in its perpetual integrity.

In this equal Commonwealth no party can be at variance with, or gain ground upon another; and as there can be no factions, so neither will there be any seditions; because the people are without the power or the interest to raise commotions; they would be as likely to throw themselves into the sea, as to disturb the state. It is one of his political axioms, that where the public interest governs, it is a government of laws; but

where a private interest, it is a government of men, and not of laws.

HARRINGTON was no admirer of a mixed monarchy; his political logic includes some important truths. "In a mixed monarchy, the nobility sometimes imposing chains on the king or domineering over the people, the king is either oppressing the people without control, or contending with the nobility, as their protectors; and the people are frequently in arms against both king and nobles, till at last one of the three estates become master of the other two, or till they so mutually weaken one another, that either they fall a prey to some more potent government, or naturally grow into a Commonwealth—therefore mixed monarchy is not a perfect government; but if no such parties can possibly exist in OCEANA, then it is the most equal, perfect, and immortal Commonwealth. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*"

The "equality" of Harrington, however, was not fashioned to any vulgar notions of a levelling democracy. He maintained the distinctions of orders in society. The great founder of a Commonwealth was first a *gentleman*, from Moses downwards; though, he says, "there be great divines, poets, lawyers, great men in all professions, the genius of a great politician is peculiar to *the genius of a gentleman.*" And further, "An army may as well consist of soldiers without

officers, or of officers without soldiers, as a Commonwealth (especially such an one as is capable of greatness) consist of a people without gentry, or of a gentry without a people."

A work of such original invention, replete with the most curious developments of all former political institutions, of which the author proposed to resume the advantages and to supply the deficiencies, from the ancient Commonwealth of Moses to the recent republic of the Hollanders, and moreover throwing out some novel general views of our own national history, formed a volume opportune to engage public attention. It was enlivened by the pleasing form of a romance, where, in the council of the legislators, the debaters plead for their favourite form of government with infinite spirit.

The publication of OCEANA was, however, long retarded; first by the honesty of our sage, and secondly by the influence of two very opposite parties equally alarmed. Harrington was anxious that his proselytes should debate his opinions, and even partially promulgate them in their pamphlets, before he ventured to publish them. What he ably elucidated they faithfully repeated: the consequence of this indiscretion was, that the novelty had lost its gloss; and when finally his great discovery of empire following the balance of property appeared, the author was reproached for its ob-

viousness. Every great principle appears obvious when once ascertained. The vague rumours that had spread that a new model of government was about to appear made the Cromwellites and the cavaliers alike alert in their opposition; the bashaws of the great sultan, the new lords and major-generals of the Protector, sate uneasy in their usurped seats; the cavaliers, who knew Harrington's predisposition for republican institutions, loudly rémonstrated. The author was compelled to send his papers to the printers by stealth and by snatches, dispersing them among different presses. The first edition of OCEANA exhibits a strange appearance, in a confusion of all sorts of types and characters—black letter, Italian and Roman, accompanied by an unparalleled "List of Errors of the Press," being several folio pages with double columns! The author has even marked the lacerations of his panting and hunted volume from "a spaniel questing who hath sprung my book out of one press into two other." The myrmidons of Oliver hunted down their game from press to press, and at length pounced on their prey, and, with a Pyrrhic triumph, bore it to Whitehall.

All solicitations of the author to retrieve his endeared volume proved fruitless; in despair he ventured on a singular expedient. Lady Claypole, the daughter of the Protector, studied to be exceedingly gracious, and to

play the princess. Unacquainted with her ladyship, Harrington requested an audience; waiting in the anti-chamber, her little daughter soon attracted his attention; carrying her in his arms, he entered the presence-chamber, and declared that he had a design to steal the young lady—not from love, but for revenge."

"Have I injured you?"

"Not at all! but your father has stolen my child, and then you would have interceded for its restoration."

The parable of the parental author was easily explained; the pleasing manners of the elegant cavalier, which were not commonly seen in the new court of the Protectorate, doubtless assisted the petitioner with the recent princess of the revolution. "Are you sure," she earnestly inquired, "that your book contains nothing against my father's government?"

"It is a political romance! to be dedicated to your father, and the first copy to be opened by yourself."

Lady Claypole conceived there could not be any treason in a romance. She persuaded Oliver to look it over himself; the Protector, who there found himself as "the Lord Archon of Oceana," and probably with his sharp judgment deeming the whole a "romance," returned it, drily observing that the power which he had got by the sword he would not quit for a little paper-shot;" but he added, with his accustomed sancti-

monious policy, that "he as little approved as the gentleman, of the government of a *single person*, but that he had been compelled to take the office of high-constable to preserve the peace among all parties who could never agree among themselves."

OCEANA was published at a crisis when the people were still to be enchanted by the name of "Commonwealth," though they began to think that they had been mistaken in their choice, since their grievances had been heavier than under the old monarchy which they had dissolved. Harrington familiarly compared their present unquiet state to that of a company of puppy-dogs cramped up in a bag, when finding themselves ill at ease for want of room, every one of them bites the tail or the foot of his neighbour, supposing that to be the source of his misery. To such a restless people, a continual change of rulers on the rotatory system seemed a great relief; any worse than their present masters they would not suppose. "The Rota" of Harrington became so popular, that a club was established bearing its name; and they held their debates every evening with doors open for auditors or orators.

This political club was the resort of the finest geniuses of the age, many of whom have left their eminent names in our history and our literature. The members sat at a circular table—the table of ancient

knighthood and modern equality, which left a passage open within its circuit to have their coffee delivered hot without any interruption to the speaker or "the state of the nation." A contemporary assures us, that these debates were more ingenious and spirited than he had ever heard, and that those in Parliament were flat to them. Every decision how affairs should be carried was left to the balloting box—"a box in which there is no cogging," observes the master-genius of "the Rota."

This "balloting" and the principle of "rotation" were hateful to the Parliamentarians, for, as we are told, "they were cursed tyrants, in love with their power, and this was death to them." HENRY NEVILLE, the author of "Plato Redivivus," the constant associate of Harrington, and who, Hobbes (alluding to the "Oceana") said, "had a finger in that pye," had the boldness to propose the system of "rotation" to the House, warning them that, if they did not accept that model of government, they would shortly fall into ruins. In their then ticklish condition, the House had the decency to return their thanks, and the intrepidity to keep their places.

This perfectioned model of a government, when opened for the inspection of mankind, exhibited a glorious frame-work; but it seemed questionable whether this political clock-work or intellectual mechanism could perform its exact librations, depending on a number of

"balances" to preserve its nice equilibrium; and whether it could last for perpetuity by that "rotatory" motion by wheels which were never to cease. Some objected, that the author in the science of politics had been fascinated, as some in mechanics, who imagined that they had discovered "the perpetual motion." But this objection the constructor of this "political architecture" indignantly rejected. He knew that the capacity of matter can only work as long as it lasts, and therefore there can be no perpetual motion; but "the mathematician must not take God to be such as he is. The equal commonwealth is built up by the understandings of the people. Now the people never die—they are not brute matter. This movement of theirs comes from the hands of the Eternal Mover, even God himself."

This romance of politics has been pronounced by a high authority as "one of the boasts of English literature;" and the philosophic Hume has even ventured to pronounce the work as "the *only valuable model of a commonwealth* that has yet been offered to the public." Perhaps the historian would pass it off as "the only valuable one," from a conviction that it was perfectly harmless. It is worthy of remark, that when, in 1688, a grand *auto da fé* was performed by the University of Oxford on certain political works—when they condemned to the flames Baxter's "Holy Commonwealth,"

written against Harrington's "Heathen Commonwealth," as Baxter calls "Oceana," with Hobbes, and Milton, and others—no one proposed this condign punishment to the manes of Harrington, considering, no doubt, that a romance was too impracticable as a political system. Yet the Republican party has always held to "Oceana" as their text-book; and it was with this view that TOLAND edited this great work, and, in his life of Milton, has declared "Oceana" to be an unrivalled model of commonwealth, for its *practicableness, equality,* and completeness; and once HOLLIS, during the fervour of founding a republic in Corsica, recommended by public advertisement "Oceana" as the most perfect model of a free government.

"OCEANA" has perpetuated a thoughtful politician's dreams. But are there no realities in dreams? Even in dreaming, a great artist often combines conceptions too fugitive, too mysterious, too beauteous, for his palpable canvas. And thus the fanciful pictures of our philosophical politician were the results of his deep and varied studies in the ancient and modern writings on the science of politics—from Aristotle to Machiavel, from Machiavel to Hobbes. His pages are studded with axioms of policy, and impress us by many an enduring truth. His style is not always polished, and is sometimes perplexed; but no writer has exceeded

him in the felicity and boldness of his phrases; and his pen, though busied on higher matters, sparkles with imagery and illustration.

That a mind so sagacious and even predictive as was that of Harrington's in the uncertainty of human events should be led away by theoretical fallacies, is a useful example for political speculators*. Constantly he extols the dark mysterious dominion of aristocratic Venice, "being a commonwealth having no causes of dissolution." He dwells on "the rotation of its senate," and its prompt, remedial, concealed power. "It is immortal in its nature; and to this day she stands with one thousand years of tranquillity on her back: notwithstanding," he thoughtfully adds, "that this government consists of men not without sin."

* I think that Harrington presciently detected the latent causes of a great revolution in France. The curiosity of the passage may compensate for its length—

"Where there is tumbling and tossing upon the bed of sickness, it must end in death or recovery. Though the people of the world, in the dregs of the Gothic empire, be yet tumbling and tossing upon the bed of sickness, they cannot die; nor is there any means of recovery for them but by ancient prudence; whence, of necessity, it must come to pass that this drug be better known. If *France*, *Italy*, and *Spain* were not all sick—all corrupted together, there would be none of them so; for the sick would not be able to withstand the sound, nor the sound to preserve their health without curing of the sick. *The first of these nations, which, if you stay her leisure, will, in my mind, be France*, that recovers the health of ancient prudence shall certainly *govern the world.*"—*Oceana*, p. 168; edition 1771.

A single day of treason sufficed to terminate this immortal commonwealth of Venice, with all its "ballottings" and "its rotations," and its hidden and horrible dictature, where sate the council of "Three" in their dark conclave, like the sister-fates, the arbiters of every soul in Venice. Alas for that folly of the wise, who, in the delusion of a theory, to support the edifice of imagination disguise the truths which might shake it! The advocate of a free state, he who pretends to draw sovereignty from the hands of the people, is the perpetual eulogist of the most refined tyranny that ever swayed the destiny of a people. Spirit of Harrington! meditate in thy sepulchral city, motionless and naked as she lies, there to correct so many passages of admiration which spread their illusion in thy "OCEANA!"

Harrington was equally fallible on the strength of his political axiom, "that the balance of power depends on that of property;" applying it to his own critical period, he pronounced that it was impossible ever to re-establish monarchy among English commonwealthmen. Property had changed possessors; it could never revert to its former owners. Four years after "Oceana" was published, and "the Rota Club" was still illumining the nation, the commonwealth returned to monarchy by a beck, and without a word!

Theoretical politicians too often omit in their artifi-

cial constructions, and their moral calculations, something more prompt to act in the conduct of men than even their interests—the stirring passions of ambition, of faction, and the vacillations of "the sovereign-people," now maddening for a republic, now rushing into a monarchy, "tumbling and tossing upon their bed of sickness."

When the Restoration arrived, however it may have deranged the system, it seems not to have disturbed the systematiser. He observed, that "the king comes in; if he calls a parliament of the cavaliers on our great estates, let them sit seven years, and they will all turn commonwealth-men." He retained in all its force his master-passion of ideal politics. He now decided to reduce "Oceana" into plain axioms, divested of tedious argumentation, and formal demonstration, adapted to the most vulgar capacities. He was easily induced to offer some immediate instructions for the king's service. A paper was first shown to some of the courtiers, who suspected treason in any scheme where their particular interests were not at all consulted. One morning, when Harrington was busily engaged, with all his aphorisms lying loose on a table before him, suddenly entered Sir William Poulteney, and other officers, to seize on the philosopher and the philosophy "for treasonable designs and practices." As they were huddling together the

scattered members of the "Oceanic" mind, the innocent philosopher, innocent of treason, begged the favour of "stitching them together" before they were taken to Whitehall. The derangement of his system appeared to him more dreadful than seeing himself hurried to the Tower.

Harrington had kept up his intimacy with old friends, among whom were many commonwealth-men, from Major Wildman, an intriguing Cromwellite, down to the notorious Barebones, on whom he declared, however, that he had only called "at his shop" thrice in his life. He was now involved in a pretended plot, which the chancellor himself, though furnished with accounts of the meetings of certain parties, declared that he could make nothing of. A speculative politician was a very suspicious person in the days of restoration. Harrington, assuredly, was no plotter. Our philosopher contrived to send his sisters his examination before his relative Lord Lauderdale and others, curious for its topics of discussion, and the poignancy of the dialogue. I cannot pass by one singular passage.

"You charge me with being eminent in principles contrary to the king's government, and the laws of this nation. Some, my lord, say, that I, being a private man, have been so mad as to meddle with politics; what had a private man to do with government? My

lord, there is not any *public* person, not any *magistrate* that has written in politics, worth a button. All they that have been excellent in this way have been private men, as private men as myself. There is Plato, there is Aristotle, there is Livy, there is Machiavel. My lord, I can sum up Aristotle's politics in a very few words; he says there is the barbarous monarchy, such a one where the people have no votes in making the laws; he says there is the heroic monarchy, such a one where the people have their votes in making the laws; and then he says there is democracy, and affirms that a man cannot be said to have liberty but in a democracy only."

My Lord Lauderdale, who thus far had been very attentive, at this showed some impatience.

Har.—"I say Aristotle says so; I have not said so much. And under what prince was it? Was it not under Alexander, the greatest prince in the world? Did Alexander hang up Aristotle, did he molest him?" And he proceeds with Livy, who wrote under Cæsar, and the commonwealth-man, Machiavel, under the Medici, unmolested.

"I wrote under an usurper, Oliver. He having started up into the throne, his officers kept a murmuring for a commonwealth. He told them that he knew not what they meant, but let any one show him that there was any such thing as a commonwealth, they

should see that he sought not himself; the Lord knew he only sought to make good the cause. Upon this some sober men thought that if any in England could show what a commonwealth was, it was myself. I wrote, and after I had written, Oliver never answered his officers as he had done before; therefore I wrote not against the king's government; and if the law could have punished me, Oliver had done it; therefore my writing was not obnoxious to the law. After Oliver, the parliament said they were a commonwealth; I said they were not; and proved it, insomuch that the parliament accounted me a cavalier, and one that had no other design in my writing than to bring in the king; and now the king, first of any man, makes me a Roundhead!"

Certainly no theoretical politician has ever more lucidly set before us the cruel dilemmas of speculative science.

The story of HARRINGTON now becomes calamitous. In vain his sisters petitioned that the prisoner, for his justification, should be brought to trial,—no one dared to present the petition to parliament. He was suddenly carried off to St. Nicholas Island, near Plymouth, and by favour afterwards was lodged in Plymouth Castle, where the governor treated the state-prisoner with the kindness he had long wanted. His health gradually

gave way—his mind fell into disorder; his high spirit and his heated brain could not brook this tormenting durance—his intellect was at times clouded by some singular delusions, and his family imagined that it was intended that he should never more write "Oceanas." The physician of the castle had prescribed constant doses of guaiacum taken in coffee. At length, other physicians were despatched by his family; they found an emaciated patient deprived of sleep, and under their hands testified that the copious use of this deleterious beverage, with such drying drugs, was sufficient to occasion hypochondriasm, and even frenzy, in any one who had not even a predisposition. The surly physician of the state-prison insisted that Harrington counterfeited madness.

His delusions never left him, yet otherwise his faculties remained unaltered. He had strange fancies about the operations of the animal spirits, good and evil, and often alarmed his friends by his vivacious descriptions of these invisible agencies. "Nature," he said, "which works under a veil, is the art of God." But how are we to account, in a mind otherwise sane, for his notion that his thoughts transpired from him, and took the shapes of flies or bees? Aubrey has given a gossiper's account of this ludicrous hypochondriasm. Harrington had a summer-house revolving on a pivot,

which he turned at will to face the sun; there sat the great author of "Oceana," whisking a fox's brush to disperse this annoyance of his transpired thoughts in the flies or bees, which, whenever they issued from crevices, he would appeal to those present, whether it was not evident to them that they had emerged from his brain? An eminent physician had flattered himself that he would be able to out-reason this delusion, by that force of argument and positive demonstration to which his illustrious patient only would attend; but the physician discovered that no argument could avail with the most invincible disputant in Europe. The sanity of the man only strengthened his insanity. Besides, our philosopher believed that he had discovered a new system of physiology, in what he called "The Mechanics of Nature." Harrington declared that his fate was that of Democritus, who, having made a great discovery in anatomy, was deemed mad by his associates, till Hippocrates appeared, and attested the glorious truth, confounding the laughers for ever! He now resolved to prove against his doctors, that his notions were not, as they alleged, hypochondriacal whims, or fanciful delusions. Among his manuscripts was found this promised treatise, thus opening—"Having been for nine months, some say, in a disease, I in a cure, I have been the wonder of physicians, and

they mine!" It is much to be regretted that the first part of this singular design has only reached us, wherein he has laid down his axioms, many of which are indisputable, coherent, and philosophical, however chimerical might have been their application to his particular notions. The narrative of his own disorder, which was to form the second part, would have been a great psychological curiosity, for the philosopher was there to have told us, how "he had felt and saw Nature; that is, how she came first into his senses, and by the senses into the understanding," and "to speak to men that have had the same sensations as himself." The logical deliriums of Harrington, it is not impossible, might have thrown a beam of light on "the Human Nature" of Hobbes, and "The Understanding" of Locke.

It is for the medical character to develop the mysteries of this condition of man; but this moral phenomenon of the partial delusions of the noblest intellect remains an enigma they have not yet solved. Harrington never recovered his physical energy, while his "Understanding" betrayed no symptoms of any decay in the exercise of his vigorous faculties.

There is one dark cloud which dusks the lustre of the name of HARRINGTON. Opening the volume of his works, we are startled by an elaborate treatise on

"The Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy." It is not merely one of the most eloquent invectives against monarchical institutions, but it overflows with the most withering defamations, such as were prevalent at that distempered season, when the popular writers accumulated horrors on the memories of their late sovereigns, to metamorphose their monarchs into monsters. In this terrible state-libel, all kings are anathematised: James the First was the murderer of his son; Charles the First was a parricide. Of that "resolute tyrant Charles," we have an allusion to "his actions of the day; his actions of the night;"—from which we must infer that they were equally criminal.

The reader, already acquainted with the intimate intercourse of our author with Charles the First, and with all his permanent emotions, which probably induced his mental disorder, must start at the disparity of the writing with the writer. A thorough-paced partisan has here acted on the base principle of reviling the individual, whom he privately acknowledged to be wholly of an opposite character. It would be a solecism in human nature, had Harrington sent forth an historical calumny, which only to have read, must have inflicted a deep pang in his heart. He was a philosopher, who neither flattered nor vilified the prince, nor the people; their common calamities he ascribes to

inevitable causes, which had been long working those changes independent of either. In the reigns of James and Charles, according to his favourite principle, "The English Balance," in favour of "popularity," was "running like a bowl down hill." He does justice to the sagacity of the indolent James, who, he tells us, "not seldom prophesied sad things to his successors;" and of Charles the First, on succeeding to his father, Harrington has expressed himself with the utmost political wisdom and felicity of illustration. "There remained nothing to the destruction of a monarchy, retaining but the name, more than a prince, who, by contending, should make the people to feel those advantages which they could not see. And this happened to the next king (Charles), who, too secure in that undoubted right, whereby he was advanced to the throne which had no foundation, dared to put this to an unseasonable trial, on whom, therefore, fell the tower in Silo. Nor may we think they on whom this tower fell were sinners above all men; but that we, unless we repent and look better to the true foundations, must likewise perish*." All that our philosopher had to deliver to the world on the many contested points of that unhappy reign, was the illustration of his principle, and not the infamy of vulgar calumny. With the

* The Art of Law-giving, 366, 4to edition.

philosophic Harrington, Charles the First was but "a doomed man;" not more a sinner, because the tower of Silo had fallen upon his head, than those who stood without. This was true philosophy, the other was faction.

The treatise on "The Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy," prominently placed at the opening of the works of Harrington, and inseparably combined with his opinions by the reference in the general index—this treatise which has settled like a gangrene on the fair character of the author of "Oceana," which has called down on his devoted head the execrations of honourable men*, and which has misled many generations of readers, is the composition of a salaried party writer, in no way connected with our author. Toland, the first editor of Harrington's works, introduced into the volume this anonymous invective, which has thus come down to us sanctioned by the philosopher's name. There was no plea of any connexion between the two authors, and much less between their writings. The editor of the edition of 1771 has silently introduced the name of the real author in the table of contents, but without prefixing it to the tract, or without any further indication to inform the reader.

* See the solemn denunciations of the "Biographia Britannica," p. 2536, which are repeated by later biographers; see Chalmers.

Whether zeal for "the cause" led Toland to this editorial delinquency, or whether he fell into this inadvertence from deficient acumen, it remains a literary calamity not easily paralleled, for a great author is condemned for what he never could have written.

THE AUTHOR OF "THE GROUNDS AND REASONS OF MONARCHY."

THE author of "The Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy," whose historical libel is perpetuated in the works of Harrington, is JOHN HALL, of Gray's Inn, sometimes described of Durham; one of those fervid spirits who take the bent of the times in a revolutionary period. He must be classed among those precocious minds which astonish their contemporaries by acquisitions of knowledge, combined with the finest genius, and in their boyhood betray no immaturity. We may receive with some suspicion accounts of such gifted youths, though they come from competent judges; but when we are reminded of the Rowley of Chatterton, and find what HALL did, we must conclude that there are meteorous beings, whose eccentric orbits we know not how to describe. HALL, prevented by the civil wars from entering the university, pursued his studies in the privacy of the library at Durham. When the war ceased, he was admitted at Cambridge; and in 1646 published, in his nineteenth year, *Horæ Vacivæ*, or "Essays, with some Occasional Considerations." These are essays in prose; and at a time when our literature

could boast of none except the masterpieces of Lord Bacon, a boy of nineteen sends forth this extraordinary volume. Even our plain Anthony caught the rapture; for he describes its appearance—"the sudden breaking forth of which amazed not only the university, but the more serious part of men in the three nations, when they (the Essays) were spread." Here is the puerility of a genius of the first order! A boy's essays raised the admiration of "the three nations!" and they remain still remarkable! This youth seems to have modelled his manner on Bacon for the turn of his thoughts, and on Seneca for the point and sparkle of his periods. The dwarf rose strong as a giant *.

The boy having astonished the world by a volume of his prose, amazed them in the succeeding year by a volume of his verse, poetry as graceful as the prose was nervous; his verses still adorn the most elegant of our modern anthologies †.

Attracted to the metropolis, he entered as a student at Gray's Inn; and there his political character soon assumed the supremacy over his literary. He sided with the independents, the ultra-commonwealthmen, and satirised the presbyterians, the friends of monarchy.

* Three or four of these Essays have been reprinted in "The Restituta," vol. iii. The original book is very rare.

† See Ellis' "Specimens."

He plunged into extreme measures; courting his new masters by the baseness of a busy pen, he justified Barebone's parliament, got up a state-pamphlet against the Hollanders, proposed the reform of the universities, "to have the Frier-like list of the fellowships *reduced*, and *the rest of the revenue* of the university *sequestered into the hands of the committee*," of which, probably, he might himself have been one. The Exchequer was opened; he received "present sums of money;" and the council granted their scribe a considerable pension.

During this life of political activity, Hall, in 1650, was commanded by the council of state, to repair to Scotland, to attend on Cromwell, for the purpose of settling affairs in favour of the commonwealth, and to wean the Scots from their lingering affection for the surviving Stuart. It was then that Hall, in his vocation, sent forth the thunder of a party-pamphlet, "The Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy." This extraordinary tract consists of two parts; the first, more elaborately composed, is an argumentative exposition of anti-monarchical doctrines; in the second, to bring the business home to their bosoms, he offers a demonstration of his principles, in a review of the whole Scottish history, sarcastically reminding them of their kings "crowned with happy reigns, and quiet deaths (two successively scarce dying naturally)." It is a mass of

invectives and calumnies in the disguise of grave history; and this historical libel, concocted for a particular time and a particular place, was eagerly received at Edinburgh, and immediately re-published in London, where it was sure of as warm a reception*.

Hall's passion for literature must have been intense; for amid these discordant days, he found time to glide into hours of refreshing studies. He gave us the first vernacular version of "the Sublime" of Longinus †, and left another of the moral Hierocles. This gifted youth with sportive facility turned English into Latin, or Latin into English; it has been recorded of him that he translated the greater part of a singular work of the Alchemical Maier, in one afternoon over his wine at a tavern; and he entranced the ear of that universal patron, Edward Bendlowes, by turning into Latin verse three hundred lines of his mystical poem of "Theophila," at one sitting.

* I found the origin of this eloquent and factious performance in an account of JOHN HALL, prefixed to his translation of "Hierocles on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras:" it proceeds from a friend—John Davies of Kidwelly. The treatise of Hall, in its original edition, is so rare, that no copy has been found at the British Museum, nor in the King's Library; it was, however, reprinted at the time in London.

† "A piece of great learning, entitled 'The Height of Eloquence,' written in Greek, by Dionysius Longinus, rendered into English from the original, by John Hall, Esq.," London, 1652, 8vo.—*Brüggeman's English Translations.*

In this impassioned existence, excited by the acrimony of politics, and the enthusiasm of study, he fell into reckless dissipation, and undermined a constitution which, probably, had all the delicacy and sensitiveness of his genius. He sunk in the struggle of celebrity and personal indulgence, and hastened back to his family to die, when he had hardly attained to manhood.

A true prodigy of genius was this JOHN HALL; for not only he could warm into admiration our literary antiquary, but the greater philosopher Hobbes, not prone to flattery, has left a memorial of this impassioned and precocious being. "Had not his debauches and intemperance diverted him from the more severe studies, he had made an extraordinary person; for no man had ever done so great things at his age."

COMMONWEALTH.

When the term Commonwealth deeply occupied the minds of men, they had formed no settled notions about the thing itself; the term became equivocal, of such wide signification that it was misunderstood and misapplied, and always ambiguous; and a confusion of words led many writers into a confusion of notions.

The term *Commonweal*, or *wealth*, indeed appears in our statutes, in the speeches of our monarchs, and in the political works of our writers, long before the idea of a *republic*, in its popular sense, was promulgated by the votaries of democracy. The term *Commonweal* explains itself; it specifies no particular polity but the public weal; and even the term *republic* originally meant nothing more than *res publicæ*, or "the affairs of the public." Sir Thomas Smith, the learned secretary to Elizabeth, who has written on the English constitution, entitles his work "The Commonwealth of England." James the First justly called himself "the great servant of the Commonwealth." The Commonwealth, meaning the kingdom of England, is the style of all the learned in law.

The ambiguity of the term *Commonwealth* soon

caused it to be perverted by the advocates of popular government, who do not distinguish the state from the people; this appears as early as the days of Rawleigh, who tells us, that "the government of all the common and baser sort is by an *usurped nick-name* called a COMMONWEALTH*."

It was in the revolutionary period of Charles the First that the terms *Commonwealth* and *Commonwealthman* were adopted by the governing party, as precisely describing their purity of devotion to the public weal. In the temper of the times the Commonwealth became opposed to the monarchy, and the Commonwealthman to the royalist. Cromwell ironically asked what was a Commonwealth? affecting an ignorance of the term.

When Baxter wrote his "Holy Commonwealth" against Harrington's "Heathenish Commonwealth," he had said, "I plead the cause of monarchy as better than democracy or aristocracy." Toland, a Commonwealthman in the new sense, referring to Baxter's work, exclaims that "A monarchy is an odd way of modelling a Commonwealth." Baxter alluded to an English Commonwealth, in its primitive sense, and Toland restricted the term to its modern application. Indeed Toland exults in the British constitution being a Com-

* Rawleigh's "Remains."

monwealth in the popular sense, in his preface to his edition of Harrington's works, and has the merit of bringing forward as his authority the royal name of James the First, and which afterwards seems to have struck Locke as so apposite that he condescended to repeat it. The passage in Toland is curious: "It is undeniably manifest that the English government is *already a Commonwealth* the most free and best constituted in the world. This was *frankly* acknowledged by King James the First, who styled himself *the great servant of the Commonwealth.*" One hardly suspected a republican of gravely citing the authority of the royal sage, on any position!

The restoration made the term *Commonwealthman* odious as marking out a class of citizens, in hostility to the government; and *Commonwealth* seems, in any sense, to have long continued such an offensive word that it required the nicest delicacy to handle it. The use of the term has even drawn an apology from LOCKE himself when writing on "government." "By Commonwealth," says our philosophical politician, "I must be understood all along to mean, *not a democracy*, but any independent community, which the Latins signified by the word *civitas*, to which the word which best answers in our language is *Commonwealth.*" However, Locke does not close his sentence without some trepidation

for the use of an unequivocal term, obnoxious even under the new monarchy of the revolution. "To avoid ambiguity I crave leave to use the word *Commonwealth* in that sense in which I find it *used by king James the First,* and I take it to be its genuine signification—which *if anybody dislike, I consent with him to change it for a better*!" An ample apology! but one which hardly suits the dignity of the philosophical writer.

THE TRUE INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSE.

It is only in the silence of seclusion that we should open the awful tome of "The True Intellectual System of the Universe" of RALPH CUDWORTH*. The history and the fate of this extraordinary result of human knowledge and of sublime metaphysics, are not the least remarkable in the philosophy of bibliography.

The first intention of the author of this elaborate and singular work, was a simple inquisition into the nature of that metaphysical necessity or destiny which has been introduced into the systems both of philosophy and religion, wherein man is left an irresponsible agent in his actions, and is nothing more than the blind instrument of inevitable events over which he holds no control.

This system of "necessity" or fate, our inquirer traced to three different systems, maintained on distinct principles. The ancient Democritic or atomical physiology endows inert matter with a motive power. It views a creation, and a continued creation, without

* My copy is the folio volume of the first edition, 1678; but they have recently reprinted Cudworth at Oxford in four volumes.

a creator. The disciple of this system is as one who cannot read, who would only perceive lines and scratches in the fairest volume, while the more learned comprehend its large and legible characters; in the mighty volume of nature, the *mind* discovers what the *sense* may not, and reads "those sensible delineations by its own inward activity," which wisdom and power have with their divinity written on every page. The absurd system of the atomist or the mere materialist Cudworth names the atheistic.

The second system of "necessity" is that of the theists, who conceive that the will of the Deity, producing in us good or evil, is determined by no immutability of goodness and justice, but an arbitrary will omnipotent; and therefore all qualities, good and evil, are merely so by our own conventional notions, having no reality in nature. And this Cudworth calls *the divine fate*, or *immoral theism*, being a religion divesting the Creator of the intellectual and moral government of the universe; all just and unjust, according to this hypothesis, being mere factitious things. This "necessity" seems the predestination of Calvinism, with the immorality of antinomianism.

The third sort of fatalists do not deny the moral attributes of the Deity, in his nature essentially benevolent and just; therefore there is an immutability in

natural justice and morality, distinct from any law or arbitrary custom; but as these theists are necessarians, the human being is incapacitated to receive praise or blame, rewards or punishments, or to become the object of retributive justice; whence they deduce their axiom that nothing could possibly have been otherwise than it is.

To confute these three fatalisms, or false hypotheses of the system of the universe, Cudworth designed to dedicate three great works; one against atheism, another against immoral theism, and the third against the theism whose doctrine was the inevitable "necessity" which determined all actions and events, and deprived man of his free agency.

These licentious systems were alike destructive of social virtues; and our ethical metaphysician sought to trace the Deity as an omnipotent understanding Being, a supreme intelligence, presiding over all, in his own nature unchangeable and eternal, but granting to his creatures their choice of good and evil by an immutable morality. In the system of the visible and corporeal world the sage contemplated on the mind which everywhere pervaded it; and his genius launched forth into the immensity of "The Intellectual System of the Universe."

In this comprehensive design he maintains that the

ancients had ever preserved the idea of one Supreme Being; distinct from all other gods. That multitude of pagan deities, poetical and political, were but the polyonomy, or the many names or attributes, of one God, in which the unity of the Divine Being was recognised. In the deified natures of things, the intelligent worshipped God; the creator in the created. The pagan religion, however erroneous, was not altogether nonsensical, as the atheists would represent it.

In this folio of near a thousand pages, Cudworth opens the occult sources of remote antiquity; and all the knowledge which the most recondite records have transmitted are here largely dispersed. There is no theogony and no cosmogony which remains unexplored; the Chaldean oracles, and the Hermaic books, and the Trismegistic writings, are laid open for us; the arcane theology of the Egyptians is unveiled; and we may consult the Persian Zoroaster, the Grecian Orpheus, the mystical Pythagoras, and the allegorising Plato. No poet was too imaginative, no sophist was too obscure, to be allowed to rest in the graves of their oblivion. All are here summoned to meet together, as at the last tribunal of their judgment-day. And they come with their own words on their lips, and they commune with us with their own voices; for this great magician of mind, who had penetrated into the recesses of mythic

antiquity to descry its dim and uncertain truths, has recorded their own words with the reverence of a votary to their faiths. "The sweetness of philology allays the severity of philosophy; the main thing, in the mean time, being the philosophy of religion*. But for our parts, we neither call Philology nor yet Philosophy our mistress, but serve ourselves of either as occasion requireth." Such are the words of the historian of "The Intellectual System of the Universe."

It is this mine of recondite quotations in their original languages, most accurately translated, which has imparted such an enduring value to this treasure of the ancient theology, philosophy, and literature†; for however subtle and logical was the master-mind which carried on his trains of reasoning, its abstract and abstruse nature could not fail to prove repulsive to the superficial, for few could follow the genius who led them into "the very darkest recesses of antiquity,"

* A remarkable expression, which we supposed was peculiar to the more enlarged views of our own age. But who can affix precise notions to general terms? Cudworth's notion of "the philosophy of religion" was probably restricted to the history of the ancient philosophies of religion.

† In the first edition, the *references* of its numerous quotations were few and imperfect; Dr. Birch, in the edition of 1743, supplied those that were wanting from Mosheim's Latin translation of the work. Warburton observed that "all the translations from the Greek are wonderfully exact."

while his passionless sincerity was often repugnant to the narrow creed of the orthodox. What, therefore, could the consequence of this elaborate volume when given to the world be, but neglect or hatred? And long was "The Intellectual System" lost among a thoughtless or incurious race of readers. It appeared in 1678. It was nearly thirty years afterwards, when the neglected author was no more, in 1703, that Le Clerc, a great reader of English writers, furnished copious extracts in his "Bibliothèque Choisie," which introduced it to the knowledge of foreigners, and provoked a keen controversy with Bayle. This last great critic, who could only decide by the translated extracts, proved to be a formidable antagonist of Cudworth. At length, in 1733, more than half a century subsequent to its publication, Mosheim gave a Latin version, with learned illustrations. The translation was not made without great difficulty; and a French one, which had been begun, was abandoned. Cudworth has invented many terms, compound or obscure; and though these may be traced to their sources, yet when a single novel term may allude to metaphysical notions or to recondite knowledge, the learning is less to be admired than the defective perspicacity is to be regretted. It was, however, this edition of a foreigner which awakened the literary ardour of the author's countrymen towards

their neglected treasure, and in 1743, "The True Intellectual System" at length reached a second edition, republished by Birch *.

The seed of immortal thoughts are not sown to perish, even in the loose soil where they have long lain disregarded. "The Intellectual System" has furnished many writers with their secondary erudition, and possibly may have given rise to that portion of "The Divine Legation" of Warburton, whose ancient learning we admire for its ingenuity, while we retreat from its paradoxes; for there is this difference between this solid and that fanciful erudition, that Warburton has proudly made his subject full of himself, while Cudworth was earnest only to be full of his subject. The glittering edifice of Paradox was raised on moveable sands; but the more awful temple has been hewn out of rocks which time can never displace. Even in our own days, Dugald Stuart has noticed, that some German systems, stripped of their deep neological disguise, have

* It may be regretted that this valuable mass of curious erudition is not furnished with an ordinary index. A singular clue to the labyrinth the author has offered, by a running head on every single one of the thousand pages; and a minutely analytical table of the contents is appended to the mighty tome. This indeed impresses us with a full conception of the sublimity of the work itself; but our intimacy with this multitude of matters is greatly interrupted by the want of a ready reference to particulars which an ordinary index would have afforded.

borrowed from Cudworth their most valuable materials. The critical decision of Leibnitz must not, however, be rejected; for if there is some severity in its truth, there is truth in its severity. "Dans 'Le Système Intellectuel' je trouve beaucoup de savoir, mais non pas assez de méditation."

Such is the great work of a great mind! We have already shown its hard fate in the neglect of the contemporaries of the author—that thoughtless and thankless world many a great writer is doomed to address; and we must now touch on those human infirmities, to which all systems of artificial theology and speculative notions are unhappily obnoxious.

In stating the arguments of the atheists at full, and opposing those of their adversaries, this true inquirer suffered the odium of Atheism itself! "It is pleasant enough," says Lord Shaftesbury, "that the pious Cudworth was accused of giving the upper hand to the atheist for having only stated their reasons and those of their adversaries fairly together." The truth seems, that our learned and profound author was not orthodox in his notions. To explain the difficulty of the Resurrection of bodies which in death resolve themselves into their separate elements, Cudworth assumed that they would not appear in their substance as a body of flesh, but in some ethereal form. In his researches he

discovered the Trinity of Plato, of Pythagoras, and of Parmenides, and that of the Persian Mithra of three Hypostases, numerically distinct, in the unity of the Godhead; this spread an alarm among his brothers the clergy, and Cudworth was perpetually referred to as an unquestionable authority by the heterodox writers on the mystery of the Christian Trinity. Even his great principle, that the Unity of the Deity was known to the polytheists, was impugned by a catholic divine as derogatory of revelation, he insisting that the Pagan divinities were only a commemoration of human beings. Yet the notion of Cudworth, so amply illustrated, was not peculiar to him, for it had already been promulgated by Lord Herbert, and by the ancients themselves.

As all such results contradicted received opinions, this pious and learned man was condemned by some as "an Arian, a Socinian, or at best a deist." Some praised his prudence, while others intimated his dissimulation; on several dogmas he delivers himself with great reserve, and even so ambiguously, that his own opinions are not easily ascertained, and are sometimes even contradictory. There have been more recent philosophers, who, from their prejudices, have hardly done justice to the search of truth of Cudworth; he is depreciated by Lord Bolingbroke, who, judging the philosopher by the colour of his coat, has treated the

divine with his keenest severity, as "one who read too much to think enough, and admired too much to think freely." Bolingbroke might envy the learning which he could not rival, and borrow from those recondite stores the knowledge which otherwise might not have reached him.

Our great author had indeed the heel of Achilles. Exercising the most nervous logic, and the most subtile metaphysics, he was also deeply imbued with Platonic reveries. Ambitious, in his inquiries, to discuss subjects placed far beyond the reach of human faculties, he delighted, with his eager imagination, to hover about those impassable precincts which Providence and Nature have eternally closed against the human footstep. It was this disposition of his mind which gave birth to the wild hypothesis of *the plastic life of Nature*, to unfold the inscrutable operations of Providence in the changeless forms of existence. There is nothing more embarrassing to atheism, in deriving the uninterrupted phenomena of nature from a fortuitous mechanism of inert matter, than to be compelled to ascribe the unvaried formation of animals to a cause which has no idea of what it performs, although its end denotes an intention; executing an undeviating system without any intelligence of the laws which govern it. We cannot indeed conceive every mite,

or gnat, or fly to be the immediate hand-work of the ceaseless labours of the Deity, though so perfectly artificial, is even its wing or its leg that the Divine Artificer seems visible in the minutest production. Cudworth, to solve the enigma, fancifully concluded that the Deity had given a plastic faculty to matter—"A vital and spiritual, but unintelligent and necessary, agent to execute its purposes." He raised up a sort of middle substance between matter and spirit—it seemed both or neither; and our philosopher, roving through the whole creation, sometimes describes it as an inferior subordinate agent of the Deity, doing the drudgery, without consciousness; lower than animal life; a kind of drowsy unawakened mind, not knowing, but only doing, according to commands and laws impressed upon it.

The consequence deduced by the subtle Bayle from this fanciful system was, that, had the Deity ever given such a plastic faculty, it was an evidence that it is not repugnant to the nature of things, that unintelligent and necessary agents should operate, and therefore a motive power might be essential to matter, and things thus might exist of themselves *. It weakened the great objection against atheism. Philosophers, to extricate themselves from occult phenomena, have too

* Continuation des Pensées Diverses, iii. 90.

often flung over the gaping chasms, which they cannot fill up, the slight plank of a vague conjecture, or have constructed the temporary bridge of an artificial hypothesis; and thus they have hazarded what yields no sure footing. Of this "folly of the wise," the inexplicable ether of Newton, the whirling worlds or vortices of Descartes, and the vibrations and the vibratiuncles of Hartley, among so many similar fancies of other philosophers, furnish a memorable evidence. The *plastic life of Nature*, as explained by Cudworth, only substituted a novel term for a blind, unintelligent agent, and could neither endure the ridicule of Bolingbroke nor the logic of Bayle, and is thrown aside among the deceitful fancies of scholastic dreamers.

There was indeed from his earliest days a tinge of Platonic refinement in the capacious understanding of this great metaphysician. The theses he maintained at college were the dawn of the genius of his future works. One was on "The Eternal Differences between Good and Evil," which probably led long after to his treatise on "Eternal and Immutable Morality"—an exposition of the dangerous doctrines of Hobbes and the Antinomians*. The other question he disputed was,

* This volume, still read and valued, was fortunately saved amidst the wreck of the author's manuscripts, and was published from his own autograph copy which he had prepared for the press, so late as 1781, 8vo.

that "there are incorporeal substances immortal in their own nature"—a topic he afterwards investigated in "The True Intellectual System of the Universe"—against the principles of the Epicurean philosophy. These scholastic exercises are an evidence that the youthful student was already shaping in his mind the matters and the subjects of his future great work. Beautiful is this unity of mind which we discover in every master-genius! Even into his divinity he seems to have carried the same fanciful refinement; he maintained that "the Lord's Supper was a feast upon a sacrifice;" and such was the charm of this mysterious doctrine, that it was adopted by some of the greatest divines and scholars. It is not therefore surprising that Cudworth was held in the highest estimation by the Platonic Dr. More, of which I give a remarkable instance. Cudworth, a other divines, wrote on Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, which, he says in a letter, is "A Defence of Christianity against Judaism, the seventy weeks never having yet been sufficiently cleared and improved." Since the days of Cudworth others have "cleared and improved," and his "demonstration" is not even noticed among subsequent "demonstrations;" but Judaism still remains. Yet on this theological reverie, Dr. More has used this forcible language:—"Mr. Cudworth has demonstrated

the manifestation of the Messiah to have fallen out at the end of the sixty-ninth week, and his passion in the midst of the seventieth. This demonstration is of as much price and worth in theology as either the circulation of the blood in physic or the motion of the earth in natural philosophy." This is not only a curious instance of the argumentative theology of that period, but of the fascination of a most refining genius influencing kindred imaginations.

We now come to record the melancholy fate of this great work, in connexion with its great author. He had arranged it into three elaborate volumes; but we possess only the first—the refutation of atheism; that subject, however, is of itself complete. Although I know not any private correspondence of Cudworth, after the publication of "the Intellectual System," which might more positively reveal the state of his feelings, and the cause of the suppression of his work, in which he had made considerable progress, yet we are acquainted with circumstances which too clearly describe its unhappy fate. We learn from Warburton, that this pious and learned scholar was the victim of calumny, and that, too sensitive to his injuries, he grew disgusted with his work; his ardour slackened, and the mass of his papers lie in cold neglect. The philosophical divine participated in the fate of the few who,

like him, searched for truth freed from the manacles of received opinions.

Cudworth left his manuscripts to the care of his daughter, Lady Masham, the friend of Locke, who passed his latter days in her house at Oates. Her ladyship was literary, but the reverse of a Platonical genius; she wrote against the Platonic Norris' "Love of God," and admitted in her religion no principles which were not practicable in morals, and seems to have been rather the disciple of the author of "The Human Understanding," than the daughter of the author of "The Intellectual System." For the good sense of Lady Masham erudition lost its curiosity, and imagination its charm; and she probably with some had certain misgivings of the tendency of her father's writings! He had himself been careless of them, for we know of no testamentary direction for their preservation. By her these unvalued manuscripts were not placed in a cabinet, but thrown in a heap into the dark corner of some neglected shelf in the library at Oates. And from thence, after the lapse of half a century, they were turned out, with some old books, by the last Lord Masham, to make room for a fashionable library for his second lady. A bookseller purchased them with a notion that this waste paper contained the writings of Locke, and printing a Bible under the editorship of the

famous Dr. Dodd, introduced the scripture notes, found among the heap, in the commentary, under the name of Locke. The papers were accidentally discovered to be parts of "The Intellectual System," and after having suffered mutilation and much confusion in the various mischances which they passed through, they finally repose among our national collections; fragments on fragments which may yet be inspected by those whose intrepidity would patiently venture on the discoveries which lie amid this mass of theological metaphysics. They are thus described in Ayscough's Catalogue, 4983: "Collection of confused thoughts, memorandums, &c., relating to the eternity of torments—thoughts on pleasure—common-place book of motives to moral duties, two volumes,—and five volumes on free-will." This description is imperfect; and many other subjects, the ground-work of his future inquiries, will be found in these voluminous manuscripts. One volume, still highly valued, was snatched from the wreck, Cudworth's "Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality," which was edited by Dr. Chandler many years after the death of the author.

After all, we possess a mighty volume subject no longer to neglect, nor to mischance. "The true Intellectual System of the Universe," exists without a parallel for its matter, its subject, and its manner. Its matter

furnishes the unsunned treasures of ancient knowledge, the history of the thoughts, the imaginations, and the creeds, of the profoundest intellects of mankind, on the Deity. Its subject, though veiled in metaphysics more sublime than human reasoning can pierce, yet shows enough for us to adore. And its manner, brightened by a subdued Platonism, inculcates the immutability of moral distinctions, and vindicates the free agency of the human being, against the impious tenets which deliver him over a blind captive to an inexorable "necessity."

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PUBLISHERS, OF CONTEMPORARY MEMOIRS.

THE editors of contemporary memoirs have often suffered an impenetrable mystery to hang over their publications, by an apparent suppression of the original. By this studious evasion of submitting the manuscript to public inspection, they long diminished the credit of the printed volumes. Enemies whose hostility the memorialists had raised up, in the mean while, practised every artifice of detraction, racking their invention to persuade the world that but little faith was due to these pretended revelations; while the editors, mute and timorous, from private motives which they wished to conceal, dared not explain, in their lifetime, the part which they had really taken in editing these works. In the course of years, circumstances often became too complicate to be disentangled, or were of too delicate a nature to be nakedly exposed to the public scrutiny; the accusations grew more confident, the defence more vague, the suspicions more probable, the rumours and the hearsays more prevalent—the public confidence in the authenticity of these contemporary memoirs was thus continually shaken.

Such has been the fate of the history of the Earl of

Clarendon, which, during a long interval of time, had to contend with prudential editors, and its perfidious opponents. And it is only at this late day that we are enabled to draw the veil from the mystery of its publication, and to reconcile the contradictory statements, so positively alleged by the assertors of the integrity of the text, and the impugners of its genuineness. We now can adjust with certainty so many vague protestations of its authenticity, by those who could not themselves have known it, with the sceptical cavils which at times seemed not always doubtful, and with one infamous charge which was not less positive than it proved to be utterly fictitious. The fate and character of this great historical work was long involved in the most intricate and obscure incidents; and this bibliographical tale offers a striking illustration of the disingenuity alike of the assailants and the defenders.

The history of Lord CLARENDON was composed by the express desire of Charles the First. This prince, in the midst of his fugitive and troubled life, seemed still regardful of posterity; and we might think, were it not too flattering to his judgment, that by his selection of this historian, he anticipated the genius of an immortal writer. We know the king carefully conveyed to the noble author many historical documents, to furnish this vindication, or apology, of the calami-

tous measures to which that fated sovereign was driven. The earnest performance of this design, fervid with the eloquence of the writer, proceeding on such opposite principles to those of the advocates of popular freedom, and bearing on its awful front the condemnatory title of "The Rebellion," provoked their indignant feelings; and from its first appearance they attempted to blast its credit, by sinking it into a mere party production. But the elevated character of "The Chancellor of Human Nature," as Warburton emphatically described him, stood almost beyond the reach of his assailants; it was by a circuitous attack that they contrived to depreciate the work, by pointing their assault on the presumed editors of the posthumous history. And though the genius of the historian, and the peculiarity of his style, could not but be apparent through the whole of this elaborate work, yet rumours soon gathered from various quarters, that the text had been tampered with by "the Oxford editors;" and some, judging by the preface, and the heated and party dedication to the queen, which, it has been asserted, afterwards induced the tory frenzy of Sacheverell, imagined that the editors had converted the history into a vehicle of their own passions. The History of Clarendon was declared to be mutilated, interpolated, and, at length, even forged; the taint of suspicion long weakened the confi-

dence of general readers. Even Warburton suspected that the editors had taken the liberty of omitting passages; but, with a reliance on their honour, he believed they had never dared to incorporate any additions of their own.

The History of Lord CLARENDON thus, from its first appearance, was attended by the concomitant difficulties of contemporary history, as we shall find the editors soon discovered when they sat down to their task; difficulties which occasioned their peculiar embarrassments. Even the noble author himself had considered that "a piece of this nature, wherein the infirmities of some, and the malice of others, both things and persons, must be boldly looked upon and mentioned, is not likely to appear in the age in which it was written." Lord Clarendon seems to have been fully aware that the freedom of the historical pen is equally displeasing to all parties. A contemporary historian is doomed to the peculiar unhappiness of encountering living witnesses, prompt to challenge the correctness of his details, and the fairness of his views; for him the complaints of friends will not be less unreasonable than the clamours of foes. And this happened to the present work. The History was not only assailed by men of a party, but by men of a family. They whose relatives had immolated their persons, and wrecked their fortunes, by their allegiance to the royal cause, were mortified by the

silence of the historian; the writer was censured for omissions which had never entered into his design; for he was writing less a general history of the civil war, than a particular one of "the Rebellion," as he deemed it. Others eagerly protested against the misrepresentation of the characters of their ancestors; but as all family feelings are in reality personal ones, such interested accusers may not be less partial and prejudiced than the contemporary historian himself. He, at least, should be allowed to possess the advantage of a more immediate knowledge of what he narrates, and the right of that free opinion, which deprived of, he would cease to be "the servant of posterity." Lord Lansdowne was indignant at the severity of the military portrait of his ancestor, Sir Richard Greenvill, and has left a warm apology to palliate a conduct which Clarendon had honestly condemned; and recently, the late Earl of Ashburnham wrote two agreeable volumes to prove that Clarendon was jealous of the royal favour which the feeble Ashburnham enjoyed, and to which the descendant ascribed the depreciation of that favourite's character.

The authenticity of the history soon became a subject of national attention. The passions of the two great factions which ruled our political circles had broken forth from these kindling pages of the recent history of their own day. They were treading on ashes

which covered latent fires. Whenever a particular sentence raised the anger of some, or a provoking epithet for ever stuck to a favourite personage, the offended parties were willing to believe that these might be interpolations; for it was positively affirmed that such there were. Twenty years after its first publication, we find Sir Joseph Jekyl, in the House of Commons, solemnly declaring that he had reason to believe that the "History of the Rebellion" had not been printed faithfully.

An incident of a very singular nature had occurred, even before the publication of the History, which assuredly was unknown to the editors. Dr. Calamy, the historian of the non-conformists, at the time that Lord Clarendon's History was printing at Oxford, was himself on the point of publishing his Narrative of Baxter, and was anxious to ascertain the statements of his lordship on certain matters which entered into his own history. This astute divine, with something of the cunning of the serpent, whatever might be his dove-like innocence, hit upon an extraordinary expedient, by submitting the dignity of his order to pass through a most humiliating process. The crafty doctor posted to Oxford, and there, cautiously preserving the incognito, after ingratiating himself into the familiarity of the waiter, and then of the perruquier, he succeeded in procuring a secret communication with one of the

printers. The good man exults in the wonders which sometimes may be opened to us, by what he terms "a silver key rightly applied." The doctor had invented the treason, and now had only to seek for the traitor. A faithless workman supplied him with a sight of all the sheets printed, and, with a still grosser violation of the honour of the craft, exposed the naked manuscript itself to the prying eyes of the critical dissenter. To the honour of Clarendon, as far as concerned Calamy's narrative, there was no disagreement; but the aspect of the manuscript puzzled the learned doctor. It appeared not to be the original, but a transcript, wherein he observed "alterations and interlineations;" paragraphs were struck out, and insertions added. Here seemed an important discovery, not likely to remain buried in the breast of the historian of the non-conformists; and he gradually let it out among his literary circle. The appearance of the manuscript fully warranted the conviction of him who was not unwilling to believe that the History of Clarendon had been moulded by the hands of those dignitaries of Oxford who were supposed to be the real editors. The History was soon called in contempt, "The Oxford History." The earliest rumours of a corrupt text probably originated in this quarter, as it is now certain, since the confession of Dr. Calamy appears in his diary, that he was the

first who had discovered the extraordinary state of the manuscript.

Some inaccuracies, great negligence of dates, certain apparent contradictions, and some imperfect details—often occasioned by the noble emigrant's distant retirements, deprived, as we now know, of his historical collections—did not tend to dissipate the prevalent suspicions. The manuscript was frequently called for, but on inquiry it was not found in the Bodleian Library—it was said to be locked up in a box deposited in the library of the Earl of Rochester, who had died since the publication. Sometimes they heard of a transcript and sometimes of an original; it was reported that the autograph work by Lord Clarendon, among other valuables, had been destroyed in the fire of the Earl of Rochester's house at New Park. The inquirers became more importunate in their demands, and more clamorous in their expostulations.

About this period, Oldmixon, one of the renowned of the Dunciad, stepped forth as a political adventurer in history. He enlisted on the popular side; he claimed the honours of the most devoted patriotism; but in what degree he may have merited these will best appear when we shall more intimately discover the man himself. Oldmixon had wholly engaged with a party, and being an industrious hand, had assigned to

himself a good deal of work. Preparatory to his copious History of the Stuarts, he had preluded by two smaller works, his "Critical History of England," and his "Clarendon and Whitelocke compared." He had repeatedly insinuated his suspicions that the "History of the Rebellion" was not the entire work of Clarendon; but the more formal attack, by specifying the falsified passages, at length appeared in the preface to his History of the Stuarts. The subject of the genuineness of Clarendon's text had so long engaged public discussion, that it evidently induced this writer to particularise it, among other professed discoveries, on his extensive title-page, as one not the least likely to invite the eager curiosity of his readers. The heavy charge was here announced to be at length brought to a positive demonstration. We perceive the writer's complacency, when with an air of triumph he declared "To all which is prefixed some account of the liberties taken with Clarendon's History *before it came to the press*, such liberties as make it doubtful what part of it is Clarendon's and what not."

It is here we find the anonymous communication of "A gentleman of distinction," who was soon known to be Colonel Ducket, an M. P., and a commissioner of the excise. The colonel details a conversation with Edmund Smith, the poet, who died at his seat, that "there had

been a fine History written by Lord Clarendon; but what was published under his name was patchwork, and might as properly be called the history of the deans Aldrich, Smalridge, and Atterbury; for to his knowledge it was altered, and he himself was employed to interpolate the original." In a copy of the history, Smith had scored numerous passages of this sort, and particularly the famous one of Cinna, which had been applied to the character of Hampden.

We may conceive the sensation produced by this apparently authenticated tale. Oldmixon in triumph confirms it too from another quarter; for he appeals to "A reverend divine now living, who saw the Oxford copy by which the book was printed, altered, and interpolated." This divine was our Dr. Calamy, who could not deny what he had truly affirmed.

The anonymous voucher for this extraordinary charge which appears in the preface, was an afterthought of our historical scribe at the late hour of publication, when it must have occurred to him that the world would require the most positive testimony of such a foul forgery. It is remarkable that Oldmixon had already, in the body of his work, broadly embroidered the narrative. We may form some notion of the mode in which this impetuous writer composed history, blending his passions with his facts, by observing what

he did in the present matter. In the text of his history we discover the tale solemnly worked up into a tragic scene of penitential remorse on a deathbed; and, still farther to appropriate and confirm the exciting narrative of this forgery, he had artfully bolstered it up by an accompanying anecdote. When Smith the poet had foisted in the description of Catiline, (or Cinna, as it is erroneously written in Clarendon,) one of the doctors slapped him on the back, exclaimimg with an asseveration, "*It will do!*" And our historian proceeds: "The remorse he expressed for being concerned in this imposture were his last words." He then declares that in the highly-finished portraits of Clarendon, "all likeness is lost in a barren superfluity of words, and the workings of a prejudiced imagination, where one may suppose the drawing was his own. But that there has been much daubing in some places, and more dirt in others, put in by his editors, is now incontestable. In those clumsy painters into whose hands his work fell, there is something so very false and base, that such coin could only come from a college mint." Thus, inconsiderately, but not the less maliciously, Oldmixon filled his rapid page, and betrays his eagerness to snatch at any floating rumour or loose conversation, which he gives the world with the confidence, though he could not with the dignity, of historical truth. And

it is this reckless abandonment of his pen in his post-haste and partial works of history, which must ever weaken our trust in those more interesting portions for whose authority he refers to unknown manuscripts; and the more so, when we often detect his maimed and warped, and even interpolated quotations; and farther, recollect that Oldmixon stands himself a convicted criminal at the bar of history, having been detected in interpolating the historian Daniel when employed as editor by Kennet, which sunk the value of the first edition of that historical collection.

How was this positive and particularising charge to be refuted? Years had elapsed, and Smith had never whispered such an important secret to any friend. The original manuscript had not yet appeared to confront the detractor, and to prove the fidelity of the editors. There are difficulties which truth cannot always surmount. It is not only easier to raise a falsehood than to prove a truth, but it is possible that there may be accidents which may wholly prevent the discovery of truth. Of an accusation made years after the event, and the persons no longer in existence, we may never be enabled to remove the objections which it has succeeded in raising.

From this calamity the History of Clarendon had a narrow escape. All the parties concerned were no

longer in life, save one, who seemed as much lost to the world—Atterbury, forgotten in exile. The authenticity of the History of Clarendon was, however, the concern of literary Europe. Foreign journalists conveyed the astounding tale, assuring the literary exile that if he remained silent, the accusation must be considered as proved. The reply did not linger, for a simple fact demolished this inartificial fabric. Atterbury solemnly declared, that he had never seen any manuscript of Lord Clarendon's History; that he believed he had never exchanged a word in his life with Smith, whose habitual conduct was too loose to tolerate; and if that were true which Ducket had affirmed, that "Smith had died with a lie in his mouth." Atterbury added some new information respecting the real editors, who were Dean Aldrich and Bishop Sprat, and the late Earl of Rochester, the son of Lord Clarendon.

This unexpected confutation from the sole survivor of the accused parties revived the dismayed Clarendonians. The cards had changed; and these in their turn called for a sight of that copy of Clarendon said to have been scored by Smith. Oldmixon, baffled and mortified, appealed to his communicator; the most idle prevarications were alleged; and Colonel Ducket even cavilled at the wording of the letter which Oldmixon

had published.[9] Both parties were anxious to fling the odium on the other, but neither had the honesty to retract the slander. We may believe that they were both convinced that the manuscript of Clarendon had been tampered with, but that neither could ascertain either the matter or the manner. Ducket died during their embarrassment, and to his last day persisted in confirming his account, and even furnishing fresh particulars, as Oldmixon assures us.

In this extraordinary history of the fate of a disputed manuscript, which all had inquired after, and none had found, an incident occurred which put to rout Oldmixon and the numerous objectors to its authenticity. Seven books of the Clarendon manuscripts at length were discovered lodged in the custody of a lawyer in Bartlett's Buildings, Holborn, who was one of the executors of the second Earl of Clarendon; and, to the utter dismay of Oldmixon, the often-controverted passage of Hampden was to be seen in the original writing of the noble author. Several distinguished personages were admitted to consult the autograph; but when others applied, who came formally armed with an autograph letter of Lord Clarendon, to compare the writing with the manuscript, the lawyer was alarmed at the hostile investigation, and cautiously evaded an inspection by these eager inquirers, perhaps judging

that whatever might be the consequence, the trouble was certain.

Oldmixon, in his last distress, persisted in declaring that he was not bound to trust in the genuineness of a manuscript of which he was refused the examination. It must be acknowledged, that any partial view of the Clarendon manuscript, seen by a few, was not sufficient to establish its authority with the public; and certainly till the recent edition by Dr. Bandinell appeared, admirably collated, the aspersions and surmises of the objectors to its genuineness had by no means been removed, and, we may add, were not wholly unfounded.

This history of the great work of Lord Clarendon would be imperfect did we not develop the real causes which so long continued to obscure the inquiry, and involve its mysterious publication in the most perplexing intricacy.

Lord Clarendon himself not only doubted the propriety of the publication, but had even consented to its suppression till "a fit season, which was not likely to be in the present age." His elevated genius looked far onward to posterity. In his remarkable will, he recommended his sons to consult Archbishop Sancroft and Bishop Morley; and it was only his second son, the Earl of Rochester, who took an active part. The

position of the editors was as delicate as it was perilous, and it has been aptly described by the last editor, who at length has furnished us with a complete Clarendon. "The immediate descendants of the principal actors were alive; many were high in favour; others were connected by the closer links of friendship or alliance." The change of a virulent epithet might be charitable, and spare the ulcerated memories of a family; and time, which blunts the keen edge of political animosities, might plead for the omission of "the unfavourable part of a character," which happened to be rather of a domestic than of a public nature.

All these were important causes which perplexed the editorship of the History of Lord Clarendon; and there were also minor ones which operated on the publication. Difficulties occurred in the arrangement of the parts. The Earl hardly lived to revise his work; portions of the "Life" had been marked by him to be transferred to the "History." The first transcript by Shaw, the secretary of the author, was discovered to be very incorrect. It was necessary that a fairer copy should repair the negligence of the secretary's. Dean Aldrich read the proofs, and transmitted them to the Earl of Rochester, accompanied by the manuscript copy which that earl preserved. The corrections on the proofs were by his hand. Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, who

then had the reputation of being the most skilful critic in our vernacular idiom, it appears, suggested some verbal alterations. But it was affirmed, that the Earl of Rochester had been so scrupulous in altering the style of his father, and so cautious not to allow of any variations from the original, that the strictures of Sprat had not been complied with, which however was not true; for though the Earl of Rochester would allow no hand but his own to correct the proofs, there were omissions and verbal alterations, and occasionally may be found what went far beyond the mere change of words or phrases.

The manuscript which Calamy saw at the press shows that the transcript, however fair, had required corrections, and probably some confusion had sometimes occurred in transferring passages from the "Life" into the "History." This only can account for the reasonable suspicions of "The Curious Impertinent," which part had been so gratuitously acted by the learned Doctor on this occasion, and evidently spread the first rumours of a corrupted or an altered text.

The pretended forgery on Clarendon was nothing but a gross imposture. Who was most deeply concerned in the fabricated lie, we cannot now ascertain. Of the poet, however, we know that after frequent admonitions he had been expelled his college, for habi-

tual irregularities; and having lost his election of the censorship of the college, indulged vindictive feelings towards Dean Aldrich. It was his delight to ridicule and vituperate the Christ Church Deans,—and he might have called the History of Clarendon, "patch-work," from some imperfect knowledge picked up at the Oxford press. The poet, whose conversation flowed with his wine, on a visit at the seat of Colonel Ducket, indulging to excess his epicurean tastes, there died suddenly of repletion; by prescribing for himself so potent a dose, that the apothecary warned him of "the perilous stuff," which advice was received with contempt. As the scored Clarendon, by Smith, was never brought forth, it probably never existed to the extent described; and as Smith died unexpectedly, there could have been no scene of a death-bed repentance, about a forgery which had never been committed. The party-lie caught up in conversation was too suitable to the purposes of Oldmixon's History not to be preserved, and even exaggerated; Ducket found a ready tool in a popular historian, who was not too critical in his researches, whenever they answered his end.

But Truth is the daughter of Time—all the Clarendon manuscripts at length were collected together, and now securely repose in the Bodleian Library, where had they been deposited at first, the anxiety and contention which

for half a century disturbed the peace of honest inquirers had been spared. Why they were not there placed, open to public inspection, is no longer difficult to conjecture. Although no historical fact in the main had been altered, yet omissions and variations, and some of a delicate nature, there were, sufficient to awaken the keen glance of a malicious or an offended observer. The anxious solicitude to withdraw the manuscripts till they might more safely be examined, at a remote period, was the real and the sole cause of their mysterious concealment; and led many from party-motives to question the authenticity, and others to defend the genuineness, of which they were so many years without any evidence.

This bibliographical tale affords a striking illustration of the nature of hearsays, surmises, and cavils; of confident accusations, but ill parried by vague defences; of the infamous fictions to which party-men can be driven; all which were the consequences of that apparent suppression of the original work, which had occurred from the critical difficulties which await the editors of contemporary memoirs. The disingenuity of both parties, however, is not less observable, for while the Clarendonians maintained that the editors, as these had protested, scrupulously followed the manuscript, they themselves had never seen the original, and the

Oldmixons as audaciously assumed that it was interpolated and mutilated, without, however, producing any other evidence than their own surmises, or gross fictions or popular rumours.

With the fate of Clarendon before his eyes, a witness of the injury which this mysterious mode of publishing the History of Lord Clarendon had occasioned, the son of Bishop Burnet suffered that congenial work, the "History of his own Times," to participate in the same ill-fortune. On the publication of the first volume, this editor promised that the autograph "should be deposited in the Cottonian Library for the satisfaction of the public, as soon as the second volume should be printed." This was not done; the editor was repeatedly called on to perform that solemn contract in which he had engaged with the public. A recent fire had damaged many of the Cottonian manuscripts, and this was now pleaded as an excuse for not trusting the bishop's manuscript to the chance of destruction. Expostulation only met with evasion. We are not now ignorant of the real cause of this breach of a solemn duty. The bishop in his will had expressly enjoined that his History should be given in the state in which he had himself left it. But the freedom of the paternal pen had alarmed the filial editor. He found himself in the exact position which the son of Lord Clarendon had already preoccu-

pied. Omissions were made to abate the displeasure of those who would have writhed under the severity of the historian's censure—characters were but partially delineated, and the tale sometimes was left half told. It happened that the bishop had often submitted his manuscript to the eyes of many during his life-time. Curious researchers into facts, and profound observers of opinions, had become diligent extractors, more particularly the supervisor of the printed proofs; and when the printed volumes appeared, most of these omissions stood as living testimonials to the faithlessness of the prudential editor. The margins of various copies, among the curious in Literature, overflowed with the castrations; the forbidden fruit was plucked. We now have the History of Burnet not entirely according to "the will" of the fervid chronicler, but as far as its restored passages could be obtained; for some, it is evident, have never been recovered *. Thus it happened, that the editors of Clarendon and Burnet form a parallel case, suffering under the inconveniences of editors of contemporary memoirs.

The perplexed feeling of the times in regard to both these Histories we may catch from a manuscript letter of the great collector, Dr. Rawlinson:—"Among

* Burnet's History, iv. 552, edition 1823.

Bishop Turner's* manuscripts," Rawlinson writes, "are observations on Lord Clarendon's History, when sent him by old Edward's son, the Nonjuror, who gave it to Alma Mater; *if alterations were made*, this may be a means of discovering. I have often wondered why *the original MS.* of that History is not put into some public place to answer all objections; but when I consider *a whimsical family*, my surprise is the less. Judge BURNET has promised under his hand, on the backside of every title of the second volume of his father's History of his Life and Times, to put in the originals into some public library; but *quando* is the case. I purchased the MS. of a gentleman who corrected the press, when that book was printed, and amongst his papers I have *all the castrations*, many of which, I believe, he communicated to Dr. Beach's sons, whom T. Burnet had abused in a life of his father, at the end of the second volume†." Here, then, the world possessed sufficient evidence at the time of their early appearance, that these Histories had suffered variations and omissions—by the heirs of their authors, and the imperfect executors of their solemn and testamentary will.

I cannot quit the present subject without a remark on these great party Histories of Clarendon and Burnet.

* *Sic* in original, but probably Tanner.

† Rawlinson's Bodleian MSS., vol. ii., lett. 38.

Both have passed through the fiery ordeal of national opinion,—and both, with some of their pages singed, remain unconsumed: the one criticised for its solemn eloquence, the other ridiculed for its homely simplicity; the one depreciated for its partiality, the other for its inaccuracy; both alike, as we have seen, by their opposite parties, once considered as works utterly rejected from the historical shelf.

But Posterity reverences Genius, for posterity only can decide on its true worth. Time, potent over criticism, has avenged our two great writers of the history of their own days. The awful genius of CLARENDON is still paramount, and the vehement spirit of BURNET has often its secret revelations confirmed. Such shall ever be the fate of those precious writings, which, though they have to contend with the passions of their own age, yet, originating in the personal intercourse of the writers with the subjects of their narratives, possess an endearing charm which no criticism can dissolve, a reality which outlasts fiction, and a truth which diffuses its vitality over pages which cannot die*.

* I refer the reader to Curiosities of Literature, art. "Of Suppressors and Dilapidators of Manuscripts;" he will there find that in the case of the Marquis of Halifax' Diary, of which to secure its preservation the writer had left two copies, both were silently destroyed by two opposite partisans, the one startled at some mean deceptions of the Revolutionists of 1688, and the other at the Catholic intrigues of the court.

THE WAR AGAINST BOOKS.

THE history of our literature, at the early era of printing, till the first indications appear of what is termed "copyright," forms a chapter in the history of our civilisation which has not been opened to us.

This history includes two important incidents in our literary annals; the one, an exposition of the complicate arts practised by an alarmed government to possess an absolute control over the printers, which annihilated the freedom of the press; and the other, the contests of those printers and booksellers who had grants and licenses, and other privileges of a monopoly, with the rest of the brotherhood who maintained an equal right of publication, and contended for the freedom of the trade.

Although Caxton, our first printer, bore the title of *Regius Impressor*, printed books were still so rare in this country under Richard the Third, that an act of parliament in 1483 contains a proviso in favour of aliens to encourage the importation of books. During a period of forty years, books were supplied by foreign printers, some of whom appear to have accompanied their merchandise, and to have settled themselves here. It became necessary to repeal this privilege conceded

to foreign presses, when under Henry the Eighth the art of printing was skilfully exercised by the King's natural subjects, and to protect the English printers lest their art should decline from a failure of encouragement.

Our earliest printers were the vendors and the binders of their own books, and their domicile on their title-pages directed the curious to their abodes. Few in number, their limited editions, it is conjectured, did not exceed from two to four hundred copies. The first printers were generally men of competent wealth; and every book was the sole property of its single printer. The separate departments of author, bookseller, and bookbinder were not yet required, for as yet there was no "reading public." Some of our ancient printers combined all these characters in themselves. The commerce of literature had not yet opened in the speculative vendors of books, and that race of writers who have been designated in the modern phrase as "authors by profession." The very nature of literary property could only originate in a more advanced and intellectual state of society, when unsettled opinions and contending principles would create a growing demand for books which no one yet contemplated, and a property, of a novel and peculiar nature, in the very thoughts and words of a writer.

The art of printing, confined within a few hands, was usually practised under the patronage of the King, or the Archbishop, or some nobleman. There existed not the remotest suspicion that the simple machinery of the printer's press could ever be converted into an engine of torture to try the strength or the truth of the church and the state. Sedition, or any allusion to public affairs, never entered the brains of the ingenious mechanics solely occupied in lowering the prices of the text-writers in the manuscript market, by their own novel and wondrous transcript. Their first wares had consisted of romances which were consulted as authentic histories; "dictes, or sayings," of ancient sages which no one cared to contradict; and homilies and allegories whose voluminousness had no tediousness. Neither did the higher powers ever imagine that any control seemed needful over the printer's press. They only lent the sanction of their names, or the shelter of their abode, at the Abbey of Westminster or the monastery of St. Albans, to encourage the manufacture of a novel curiosity, for its beautiful toy, a printed book—and the press at first was at once free and innocent.

But the day of portents was not slow in its approach —a stirring age pressed on, an age for books. Under Henry the Eighth, books became the organs of the passions of mankind, and were not only printed, but

spread about; for if the presses of England dared not disclose the hazardous secrets of the writers, the people were surreptitiously furnished with English books from foreign presses. It was then that the jealousy of the state opened its hundred eyes on the awful track of the strange omnipotence of the press. Then first began that WAR AGAINST BOOKS which has not ceased in our time.

Perhaps he who first, with a statesman's prescient view, had contemplated on this novel and unknown power, and, as we shall see, had detected its insidious steps stealing into the cabinet of the sovereign, was the great minister of this great monarch. It has been surmised that the cardinal aimed to crush the head of the serpent, by stopping the printing press in the monastery at St. Albans, of which he was the abbot; for that press remained silent for half a century. In a convocation the cardinal expressed his hostility against printing; assuring the simple clergy that, if they did not in time suppress printing, printing would suppress them*. This great statesman, at this early period, had taken into view its remote consequences. Lord Herbert has curiously assigned to the cardinal his ideas as addressed to the pope:—"This new invention

* See a curious note of Hearne's in his Glossary to "Peter Langtoft's Chronicle," p. 685. Also Herbert's "Typog. Antiq." p. 1435.

of printing has produced various effects of which your holiness cannot be ignorant. If it has restored books and learning, it has also been the occasion of those sects and schisms which daily appear. Men begin to call in question the present faith and tenets of the church; and the laity read the Scriptures, and pray in their vulgar tongue. Were this suffered, the common people might come to believe that there was not so much use of the clergy. If men were persuaded that they could make their own way to God, and in their ordinary language as well as Latin, the authority of the mass would fall, which would be very prejudicious to our ecclesiastical orders. The mysteries of religion must be kept in the hands of priests—the secret and arcanum of church government. Nothing remains more to be done than to prevent further apostacy. For this purpose, since printing could not be put down, it were best to set up learning against learning; and, by introducing able persons to dispute, to suspend the laity between fears and controversies. Since printing cannot be put down, it may still be made useful." Thus, the statesman, who could not by a single blow annihilate this monster of all schism, would have wrestled with it with a statesman's policy.

The cardinal at length was shaken by terrors he had never before felt from the hated press. This minister

had writhed under the printed personalities of the rabid SKELTON and the merciless ROY; but a pamphlet in the form of "*The Supplication of Beggars*" is a famed invective, which served as a prelude to the fall of the minister. The author, SIMON FISH, had been a student of Gray's Inn, where, in an Aristophanic interlude, he had enacted his grace the cardinal to the life, and deemed himself fortunate to escape from his native shores to elude the gripe of Wolsey. In this pamphlet all the poverty of the nation,—for our national poverty at all times is the cry of "The Beggars,"—the taxation, and the grievances, are all laid to the oppression of the whole motley prelacy. These were the thieves and the freebooters, the cormorants and the wolves of the state, and the king had nothing more to do than to put them to the cart's tail, and end all the beggary of England by appropriating the monastic lands.

On a day of a procession at Westminster this seditious tract, aiming at the annihilation of the whole revenues of churchmen, was found scattered in the streets. Wolsey had the copies carefully gathered and delivered to him, to prevent any from reaching the king's eyes. Merchants, at that day, were often itinerants in their way of trade with their foreign correspondents, and frequently conveyed to England these writings of our fugitive reformers. Two of these mer-

chants, by the favour of Anne Bullen, had a secret interview with the king. They offered to recite to the royal ear the, substance of the suppressed libel. "I dare say you have it all by heart," the king shrewdly observed, and listened. After a pause Henry let fall this remarkable observation—"If a man should pull down an old stone wall, and begin at the lower part, the upper might chance to fall on his head." What at that moment was passing in the sagacious mind of the future regal reformer is now more evident than probably it was to its first hearers. Wolsey, suspicious and troubled, came to warn the king of "a pestilent heretical libel being abroad." Henry, suddenly drawing the very libel out of his bosom, presented a portentous copy to the startled and falling minister. The book became a court-book; and "the witty atheistical author," as the Roman Catholic historian designated him, was invited back to England under the safeguard of the royal protection.

But the secret, and, perhaps, yet the obscure influence of the press, must often have been apparent to Henry the Eighth, when the king sat in council. There he marked the alarms of Wolsey, and the terrified remonstrances of the entire body of "the Papelins;" and when the day came that their ejectors filled their seats, the king discovered, that though the objects were

changed, the same dread of the press continued. The war against books commenced; an expurgatory index, or a catalogue of prohibited books, chiefly English, was sent forth before Henry had broken with the papal power; subsequently, the fresher proclamation declared the books of the Papelins to be "seditious," as the use of "the new learning" had been anathematised as "heretical."

In these rapid events, dates become as essential as arguments. In 1526, anti-popery books, with their dispersers, were condemned as heretical. In 1535, all books favouring popery were decreed to be "seditious books." There were books on the king's supremacy, for or against, which cost some of their writers their heads; and there were "injunctions against English books," frequently renewed as "pestilent and infectious learnings *." All these show that now the press had obtained activity, and betray the uneasy condition of the ruling powers, who were startled by a supernatural voice, which they had never before heard.

When the first persecution of "the new religion" occurred, it did not abate the secret importations of Lutheran books †. These with the merchant had

* Strype's Memorials, i. 344 and 218.

† A curious and a copious catalogue of these books, "though the books themselves are almost perished," may be seen in Strype's "Ecclesiastical Memorials," i. 165.

become an article of commerce; and with the zealous dispensers, an article of faith: both alike ventured their lives in conveying them to London, and other places, and even smuggled them into the universities. They landed their prohibited goods in the most distant places, at Colchester, or in Norfolk. One of these chapmen in this hazardous commodity of free-thinking was at last caught at his book-binder's. He suffered at the flaming stake, and others met his fate.

It was now apparent that the secrecy and velocity of conveying the novel projects of reform, which could not otherwise have been communicated to the great body of the people, till this awful instrument had been set to work; the unity of opinion which it might create among the confused multitude; and the passions which a party either in terror, or in triumph, could artfully rouse in the sympathies of men, were felt and acknowledged by the monarch, who had himself staked the possession of his independent dominion on the energy and the eloquence of a single book *, to prepare his people for his meditated emancipation from the Tiara; and were any other proof wanting, we discover the terror of the Bishop of Durham, on the appearance

* The book, *De Vera Differentia inter Regiam Potestatem et Ecclesiasticam*, was called *The King's Book*. It seems that the scholastic monarch gave some finishing strokes to what had probably passed through the hands of his most expert casuists.

of "a little book printed in English, issuing from Newcastle." His lordship writes in great trepidation to the minister Cromwell, of this portentous little book, "like to do great harm among the people," and advising that "letters be directed to all havens, towns, and other places, to forbid the book to be sold." All the ports to be closed against "a little book brought by some folks from Newcastle!" These incidents were certain demonstrations of the political influence of this new sovereignty of the printing-press.

In the simplicity of this early era of printing, the same bishop had all the copies of Tindal's Testament bought up at Antwerp, and burned. The English merchant employed on this occasion was a secret follower of the modern apostle, who, on his part, gladly furnished all the unsold copies which had hung on hand, anxious to correct a new edition which he was too poor to publish. When one of the Tindalites was promised his pardon if he would reveal the name of the person who had encouraged this new edition, he accepted the grace; and he assured the Lord Chancellor that the greatest encourager and supporter of his Antwerp friends had been the bishop himself, who by buying up half the unsold impression, had enabled them to produce a second. This was the first lesson which taught that it is easier to burn authors than books.

There were two methods by which governments could counteract the inconveniences of the press: the one, by clipping its wings, and contracting the sphere of its action, which we shall see was early attempted; and the other, by adroitly turning its vehemence into an opposite direction, making the press contend with the press, and by division weaken its dominion.

Henry the Eighth left the age he had himself created, with its awakened spirit. The three succeeding reigns, acting in direct opposition to each other, disturbed the minds of the people; controversies raged, and books multiplied. The sphere of publication widened, in this vertiginous era, printers greatly increased in the reign of Edward the Sixth. But the craft did not flourish, when the craftmen had become numerous. We have the contemporary authority of one of the most eminent printers, that the practice of the art, and the cost of the materials, had become so exceedingly chargeable, that the printers were driven by necessity to throw themselves into the hands of "the Stationers," or booksellers, for "small gains*." It is probable that at this period, the printers perceived that vending their books at the printing-office was not a mode which made them sufficiently public. This is the first indication that the printing, and the publication or the sale of books, were becoming separate trades.

* Archæologia, vol. xxv. 104.

In this history of the progress of the press in our country, the Stationers' Company now appears. This institution becomes an important branch of our investigation, for its influence over our literature, for its monopoly, opposed to the interests of other publishers, and above all, for the practice of the government in converting this company into a ready instrument to restrain the freedom of the press.

Anterior to the invention of printing there flourished a craft or trade who were denominated *Stationers;* they were scribes and limners, and dealers in manuscript copies, and in parchment and paper, and other literary wares. It is believed by our antiquaries that they derived their denomination from their fixed locality, or *station in a street,* either by a shop or shed, and probably when their former occupation had gone, still retained their dealings in literature, and turned to booksellers*. This denomination of *stationers* indicating their stationary residence would also distinguish them from the itinerant vendors, who in a more subor-

* Pegge, in his "Anecdotes of the English Language," has somewhat crudely remarked that "the term *Stationers* was appropriated to *Booksellers* in the year 1622;" but it was so long before. It is extraordinary that Mr. Todd, well read in our literary history, admits this imperfect disclosure of Pegge into the "Dictionary of the English Language." The terms *Stationer* and *Bookseller* were synonymous and in common use in the reign of Elizabeth, and may be found in Baret's "Alvearie," 1573.

dinate capacity at a later period appear to have hawked about the town and the country pamphlets and other portable books.

In the reign of Philip and Mary "the Stationers" were granted a charter of incorporation, and were invested with the most inquisitorial powers.

The favours of a tyrant are usually favours to individuals who profit at the cost of the community, and who themselves overlooking every principle of justice, bind up their own selfish monopoly with the prosperity of criminal power. This we discover in the Company of Stationers, who were the willing dupes of that absolute power in the state which had created the corporation to do its watchful work, to carry on the war against books, and by their passive obedience they secured to themselves those privileges and licenses and other monopolies which they now amply enjoyed.

By this charter of the Stationers, it was specified that no one was to exercise the art of printing, unless he was one of the society; and the corporation, with their extraordinary but lawful authority, were to search as often as they pleased any house or chamber, &c., of any stamper or printer, or binder or seller, of any manner of books, which they deemed obnoxious to the state, or their own interest!—to seize, burn, take away,

or destroy, or convert to their own use *. The Stationers were in fact a Spanish inquisition for the cabinet of Philip and Mary, and whom the queen consulted on critical occasions, for her majesty once sent for the warden to inquire whether they had seen or heard of a sort of books sent from Zurich? The war against books was never pushed to such extremities as in a proclamation of Philip and Mary, which Strype calls, "a short but terrible proclamation." Here we learn that "whoever finds books of heresy, sedition, and treason, and does not forthwith burn the same without showing or reading them to any other person, shall be *executed for a rebel!* †" It is evident, that the grant of this incorporation was designed to make the interests of the company subservient to those of the court; for by the intermediate aid of the vigilant Stationers, every printer would be controlled, since none were allowed to be printers who were not members of this corporation, and therefore amenable to its laws.

In the succeeding reign of Elizabeth everything changed except these state-proclamations in the war against books. The object had altered, but not the objection, for though the books were different the Elizabethan style is identical with the Marian. The

* The Charter may be found in Herbert's "Typographical Antiquities," p. 1584.

† Strype's Memorials, iii. part 2d. p. 130.

same plenary powers of the Stationers were strengthened by an additional injunction, by which the government held the whole brotherhood with a closer grasp. The company were commissioned not only "to search into book-binders' shops, as well as printing-offices, for unlawful and heretical books," but they were responsible for "any unruly printer who might endanger the church and state," and "who for covetousness regard not what they print, whereby ariseth great disorder by publication of unfruitful, vain, and infamous books and papers. None shall print any manner of book except the same be first *licensed by her majesty by express words in writing*, or by *six of her privy council**."

When we recollect that the Stationers' Company under Mary were composed of the very same individuals who two years after under Elizabeth were busily ornamenting their shelves with all their late "seditious and

* In the Lansdowne Manuscripts, 43, fol. 76, will be found "an act to restrain the licentious printing, &c. unprofitable and hurtful books" 1580. After declaring that the art of printing is "a most happy and profitable invention," it is pointed at those "who pen or translate in the English tongue, poesies, ditties, and songs, serving for a great part of them to none other end, what titles soever they bear, but to set up an art of making lascivious and ungodly love, to the intolerable corruption of life and manners—*and to the no small or sufferable waste of the treasure of this realm, which is thereby consumed in paper, a forren and chargeable commoditie.*" The first paper made in England was at Dartford in 1588, by a German, who was knighted by the Queen.

heretical" books, and in removing out of sight all their late lawful and loyal ware, this transition of the feelings must have placed them in a position painful as it was ridiculous. But the true genius of a commercial body is of no party, save the predominant; pliant with their interests, a corporation, like a republic, in their zealous union can do that with public propriety which, in the individuals it is composed of, would be incongruous and absurd.

The rage of government in this war against books was still sharper at a later period, provoked by the spread of the Mar-prelate pamphlets. A decree of the Star-chamber in 1586, among other orders, allows no printer to have an additional press without license; awards that there shall be no printing in any obscure part of a house; nor any printer out of the city of London, excepting at the two Universities; and till "the excessive multitude of printers be abated, diminished, or by death given over," no one shall resume that trade; and that the wardens of the Stationers' Company, with assistants, shall enter at all times warehouses, shops, &c., to seize all "letter-presses, and other printing instruments, to be defaced, melted, sawed in pieces, broken or battered at the smith's forge*."

* This decree of the Star-chamber is printed in Herbert's "Typographical Antiquities," p. 1668.

Amid all this book-phobia, a curious circumstance occurred. The learned could not prosecute their studies for the prohibition against many excellent works, written by those who were "addicted to the errors of Popery in foreign parts," and which also contained "matters against the state of this land." In this dilemma, a singular expedient was adopted. The archbishop allowed "Ascanius de Renialme, a merchant bookseller, to bring into this realm *some few copies* of every such sort of books, upon this condition only, that they be first brought to me, and so delivered only to such persons whom we deem most meet men to have the reading of them." At this time it must have been an affair of considerable delicacy and difficulty to obtain a quotation, without first hastening to Lambeth Palace, there to be questioned!

Printing and literature, during the long reign of Elizabeth, in spite of all these Star-chamber edicts, amazingly increased; there seemed to be a swell from all the presses. Of 175 stationers, 140 had taken their freedom since this queen's accession. "So much had printing and learning come in request under the Reformation," observes our historical antiquary Strype. And such was the proud exultation of the great printer John Day, that when he compared the darkness of the preceding period with what this publisher of

Fox's mighty tomes of Martyrology deemed its purer enlightenment, he never printed his name without this pithy insinuation to the reader, "Arise, for it is DAY!" Books not only multiplied, but unquestionably it was at this period that first appeared the art of aiding these ephemeral productions of the press which supplied the wants of numerous readers. The rights of authors had hitherto derived a partial existence in privilege conceded by the royal patron, but it was now that they first gathered the fuller harvests of public favour. We shall shortly find a notice among the book-trade of what is termed "copyright*."

If the freedom of the press had been wholly wrested from the printers, it was not the sole grievance in the present state of our literature, for another custom had been assumed which hung on the royal prerogative—that of granting letters patent, or privileged licenses, under the broad seal to individuals, to deal in a specific class of books, to the exclusion of every other publisher. Possibly the same secret motive which had contrived the absolute control of the press, suggested the grants of

* The privilege of a royal grant to the author was the only protection the author had for any profits of his work. Henry the Eighth granted Palsgrave his exclusive right for the printing of his book for seven years. Bishop Cooper obtained a privilege for the sale of his "Thesaurus" for twelve years; and a translator of Tacitus, for his version, during his natural life.

these privileges. One enjoyed the privilege of printing Bibles; another all law-books; another grammars; another "almanacks and prognostications;" and another, ballads and books in prose and metre. These privileges assuredly increased the patronage of the great, and the dispensations of these favours were doubtless often abused. A singing man had the license for printing music-books, which he extended to that of being the sole vendor of all ruled paper, on the plea that where there were ruled lines, musical notes might be pricked down; and a private gentleman, who was neither printer nor stationer, had the privilege of printing grammars and other things, which he farmed out for a considerable annual revenue, by which means these books were necessarily enhanced in price.

Such monopolies, which entered into the erroneous policy of that age, and the corrupt practices of patronage, long continued a source of discontent among the generality. This was now a period when the spirit of the times raised up men who would urge their independent rights. A struggle ensued between the monopolists and the excluded, who clamoured for the freedom of the trade. "Unruly printers" not only resisted when their own houses were besieged by "the searchers" of the stationers, but openly persisted in printing any "lawful books" they chose, in defiance of any royal

privilege. A busy lawyer had been feed, who questioned this stretch of the prerogative. But the patriotism or the despair of these "unruly printers" led to the Clink or to Ludgate—to imprisonment or to bankruptcy! The day had not yet arrived when civil freedom, though youthful and bold, with impunity could "kick against the pricks" of the prerogative. It is curious here to discover that the aggrieved had even formed "a trade-union" for contributions to defend suits at law against the privileged; and when they were reminded that this mode only aggravated their troubles, and were asked by the sleek monopolists what they would gain if all were in common, which, as the privileged assumed, "would make havoc for one man to undo another," that is, those who were patentless would undo the patentees—these Cains, in the bitterness of their hearts, fiercely replied to their more favoured brothers, "We should make you beggars like ourselves *!"

Amid these clamours in the commonwealth of literature, the patentees became alarmed at the danger of having their patents revoked. The booksellers had become the more prosperous race, and some of these, combining with the Stationers' Company, opposed the privileged few. The advocates for the freedom of the trade advanced a proposition too tender to be handled

* Archæologia, xxv. 112.

by the Doctor of Civil Law, who was chosen for the arbitrator. At once these boldly impugned the prerogative royal itself in its exercise of granting privileges to printers, which they declared was against law; and however they might more successfully urge, that the better policy for the public was to admit of competition, and moderating of prices by this freedom of publication, they add, "So, too, let every man print what 'lawful book' he choose, without any exceptions, even 'any book of which the copies thereof had been *bought of the authors* for their money.'" Here we find the first notice of "copyright," and the very inadequate notions yet entertained of its nature.

The plea of the patentees more skilfully addressed the Doctor of Civil Law by their assumption of the irrefragable rights of the royal prerogative. Their own privileges they maintained by the custom, as they showed that "all princes in Christendom had granted privileges for printing, sometimes for a term of years or for life; that ancient books bore this inscription, *Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum;* that the Queen's progenitors had exercised this right, and would any dare to lessen her majesty's prerogative?" All infringers had ever been punished. They further urged, that the good of the commonwealth required that printing should be in the hands of known men,

being an art most dangerous and pernicious if it were not straitened and restrained by politic order of the prince or magistrates. With truer arguments they alleged that many useful books were now published unprofitable to the patentees, who had no other means of repaying themselves but by the sale of other books restricted to them by the protection of their privileges; and finally, they declared that the public were incurring some danger that good books might not be printed at all if privileges were revoked, for *the first printer was at charge for the author's pains and other extraordinary cost;* but should any succeeding printer who had "*the copy gratis*" sell cheaper on better paper, and with notes and additions, it would put an end to the sale of the original edition; and they pithily conclude with the old wisdom, that "It is easier to amend than to invent." Here again we see specified the cost of "copyright" in the publication of a new book.

This attempt to open the freedom of the trade, which occurred about 1583, the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Elizabeth, at length was not wholly unsuccessful; the monopolists conceded certain advantages*, and

* Nichols on the Stationers' Company.—"Lit. Anecdotes," iii.

We have a list "of books yielded by the richer printers who had licenses from the queen;" but whether they were only copies bestowed in charity for the poorer "stationers," or given up by the monopolists, I do not understand.—*Herbert's Typographical Antiq.* p. 1672.

about twenty years subsequently, towards the end of that queen's reign, when the craft of authorship, adapting its wares to the fashion of the day, was practised by a whole race of popular writers, the booksellers became almost the sole publishers of books, employing the printers in their single capacity*.

In this war against books, the severe decree of the Star-chamber, 1586, was renewed with stricter prohibitions, and more penal severity by a decree of the Star-chamber, under Charles the First, in 1637. Printing and printers were now placed under the supervision of the great officers of state; law-books were to be judicially approved by the lord chief-justices; historical works were to be submitted to the secretaries of state; heraldry was left to the lord marshal; divinity, physic, philosophy, and poetry, were to be sanctioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London. Two copies of every work were to be preserved in custody, to prevent any alterations being made in the published volumes, which would be detected on their comparison. Admirable preparatory and preventive measures! Here would ensue a general purgation of every atom in the human system, occasioning obstructions to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England, and the state or government. The aim of all these decrees and pro-

* Herbert's Typographical Antiq.—preface.

clamations was to abridge the number of printers, and to invigorate the absolute power conferred on the Stationers' Company, who had long delivered themselves, bound hand and foot, to the government, for the servile possession of their privileges. Printers were still limited to twenty, as in the reign of Elizabeth, and only four letter-founders allowed. Every printed book on paper was to bear the impress of the printer's name, on pain of corporal punishment. They held books in such terror, that even those which had formerly been licensed, were not allowed to be reprinted, without being "reviewed," as they express it, and re-watched by placing on guard this double sentinel. There are some extraordinary clauses which betray the feeble infancy of the rude policy of that day. The decree tells us that "printing in corners without license had been usually done by journeymen out of work," and to provide against this source of inquietude, it compels the printers to employ all journeymen out of employ, "though the printer should be able to do his own work without these journeymen;" and in the same spirit of compulsion, it ordains that all such unemployed shall be obliged to work whenever called on*. Masters and men were

* This remarkable "Decree of Starr-chamber concerning Printing" was in the possession of Thomas Hollis, and is printed in the Appendix to his curious Memoirs, p. 641.

equally amenable to fines impossible to be paid, and penal pains almost too horrible to endure, short of life, but not of ruin: a dark, a merciless, a mocking tribunal where the judges sate the prosecutors, and whose unwritten laws hung on their own lips; and where to discharge any accused person as innocent was looked on as a reproach of their negligence, or an imputation of their sagacity.

Did the severity of these decrees produce the evils they encountered, or was it the existence of the evils which provoked the issue of these edicts? Did the terrific executions eradicate the political mischief? There was no free press in Elizabeth's reign, and yet libels abounded! The government compulsively contracted the press by their twenty stationary printers; and behold! moveable presses, whose ubiquity was astonishing as their ceaseless working. An invisible printer mysteriously scattered his publications here and there, during the contest of the Mar-prelate faction with the bishops; and the libels of the Jesuit Parsons, and others of the Roman party, were as rife against her majesty and her minister. The same occurred when the Star-chamber was guided by the genius of Laud; the altar was raised, and the sacerdotal knife struck! but the groans of the immolated victims were a shout of triumph. A clear demonstration that nothing is

really gained by the temporary suppressions which power may enforce; the sealed book circulates till it is hoarded, and the author pilloried, mutilated, or hanged, obtains a popularity, which often his own genius afforded him no chance to acquire.

The secret design of all these entangling edicts was to hold the printers in passive obedience to the government, whatever that government might be; for each separate government, though acting on opposite principles, manifested a remarkable uniformity in their proceedings with the press. In the arbitrary days of Charles the Second, an extraordinary, if not an audacious, attempt was made to wrest the art of printing out of the hands of its professors, and to place the press wholly at the disposal of the sovereign. This usurping doctrine was founded on a startling plea. As our monarchs had granted privileges to the earliest printers, and, from the introduction of the art into England, had never ceased their patronage or their control, it was inferred, that our kings had never yielded *the royal prerogative of printing* any more than they had that of *coining*. The "mystery" of printing, in the style of the lawyers, was "a flower of the crown!"—the exercise of the prerogative; and therefore every printer in England must be a sworn servant of the crown. At such a period we are not

surprised to find an express treatise put forth to demonstrate to his sacred majesty, that "printing belonged to him, in his public and private capacity, as supreme *magistrate* and as *proprietor;*" in reality there was to be but one printer for all England, and that printer the king! This was giving at once the most elevated and the most degraded notions of "the divine art," which this servile assumer describes can "not only bereave the king of his good name, but of the very hearts of his people *."

We observe the lamentations of these advocates of arbitrary power over the freedom of the press, or, as such maintained, the confusion produced "by the exorbitant and unlawful exercise of printing in modern times." They appeal to the miseries and calamities not only recently witnessed in our own country, but in Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Wherever they track a footstep of the liberty of the press, they pause to discover its accompanying calamity. One of these writers, to convey an adequate notion of the spread and political influence of the press,

* "The Original and Growth of Printing, collected out of History and the Records of this Kingdom," &c., by Richard Atkyns, Esq., 1664. In this rare tract first appeared a narrative of the introduction of printing into Oxford, *before Caxton*, by the printer Francis Corsellis, to prove that printing was brought into England by Henry the Sixth.

has thrown out a very excitable remark:—"Had this art been known in the time of the grand profession of the Donatist and Arian heresy, it would have drowned the world in a second deluge of blood and confusion, to its utter destruction long time since." A stroke of church history which might suggest a whole volume!

The interests of the printers had coincided with the designs of government, in limiting the number of presses; for the policy of their narrow confederacy was, the fewer printers the more printing! But the interests of the booksellers were quite opposite; they were for encouraging supernumerary printers, and overstocking the printing-offices with journeymen, and by this means they succeeded in bringing the printers down to their price or their purpose; and it is insinuated, on the Machiavelian principle, that the number being greater than could live honestly by the trade, one-half must be knaves, or starve. And it seems that "knaves" were in greater requisition by the publishers of "the unlawful," or, as these were afterwards called on the establishment of a licenser of the press, "the unlicensed books," who revelled in their seductive profits *.

* For "unlicensed books" the printer charged twenty-five per cent. extra, but the booksellers sold them for double and treble the cost of other books.

"Considerations and Proposals in order to the Regulation of the

Among the effusions of the political Literature of the egregious Sir ROGER L'ESTRANGE, versed in the arcana of the publishing system of his day, I discover a project which terminated in renewing the office of the Licenser of Books, in his own person; the only pitiful preferment the Restoration brought the clamorous Loyalist. Our literary knight addressed Charles the Second, to impress on his majesty the urgency of an immediate regulation of the press; "this great business of the press being now engrossed by Oliver's creatures, and the *honest* printers being impoverished by the late times."

This project to regulate the press by L'Estrange, chiefly turned on the dexterous management of the printers. He calculated, for four thousand pounds, to buy up the presses of the poor printers, who were willing to be reimbursed, and look to better trades. The bolder project was to emancipate the printers from the tyranny of the booksellers, by which means they would no longer be necessitated to print whatever their masters ordered. The printers at this moment had menaced to separate themselves from the stationers, with a view of their own.

The printers had been gradually deprived of any

Press, together with diverse instances of Treasonous and Seditious Pamphlets, proving the necessity thereof," 1663.

shares in new publications; they had been thrown out of all copyright, and probably had grown somewhat jealous of their prosperous masters; the printers complained that they were nothing else than slaves to the booksellers. They called for an independent company of "the mystery," and reverting to the custom of the early printers, they desired to have their own presses under their own management, and to print only the copies of which they themselves were the proprietors.

The future licenser of the press, who was throwing his net to haul in all these fish at a cast, took advantage of this project, which at once was levelled at the freedom of the trade, and the freedom of the press. Printers solely working on their own copies, would indeed check "the ungovernable ambition of the booksellers," by diminishing their copyrights; while those "unhappy printers" would be relieved, who at present have no other work than what "the great dealers in treasonous or seditious books" furnished them. All these were but the ostensible motives, for the real object designed was that the printers should become the creatures of the patronage of government, and, by the diminution of their number, the contracted circle would be the more easily managed.

Such were the systematic struggles of our governments in the revival of the severe acts for the regula-

tion of printing at various periods. It was long assumed that printing was not a free trade, but always to remain under regulation.

When Dr. Johnson, labouring under the pressure of his ancient notions, contending with the clear perception of his sceptical sagacity, once stood awed before the sublime effusion of Milton's "Areopagitica," he hazarded this opinion, for by balancing his notions it cannot be accepted as a decision: "The danger of such unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the science of government which human understanding seems unable to solve."

And whatever either the advocates or the adversaries of the freedom of the press may allege, this problem in the science of government remains as insoluble at this day as at any former period—a truth demonstrated by a circumstance which has repeatedly occurred in our own political history. The noble treatise of Milton for a free press had not the slightest influence on that very parliament whose members had long suffered from its oppression. The Catholics clamoured for a free press under Charles the Second, but the same act operating against them under James the Second, from the use of the press by the Protestant party—the liberty of the press was then condemned as exorbitant and intolerable. The advocates of a free press thus become its adver-

saries whenever they themselves form the ruling power. Orators for the freedom of the press suddenly send forth outcries against its abuses; but as those, whoever the party may be, who are in place, are called the government, it always happens that the opposition, whatever may be their principles, must submit to the risk of being deemed seditious libellers.

THE END.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

00094507

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 March, 2016